RETROSPECTIVE

DHA 1995

Coordination of humanitarian assistance

UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS

Foreword by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

UN Photo/M. Grant

During the past decade, the world public has become concerned, more than ever before, about the circumstances of people driven from their homes, their land and their country because of violence and disaster. Expectations of a new era of peace raised at the end of the cold war have not been realized. While the world is no longer fraught with bipolar tensions, increased fragmentation has caused far too many smaller conflicts to flare upon the globe.

Today there are more than 20 active conflicts and another 30 potentially dangerous situations which could result in new violence between or within nations. The consequences of these situations have been an unprecedented level of displacement of people and widespread suffering among innocent victims.

Thus the international community is confronted with a new and extraordinary humanitarian challenge. Meeting the needs of more than 40 million victims in extremely difficult security circumstances is the essence of the work of the humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system and the non-governmental community. Dedicated relief workers have lost their lives, but the commitment of the humanitarian community has never wavered. Ensuring a timely, coherent, and coordinated response has become more vital than ever.

For four years now, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been at the forefront of the international response to emergencies and disasters. It has coordinated the delivery of humanitarian assistance from Angola to Afghanistan, Mozambique to Somalia, Iraq to the Caucasus and the Great Lakes Region to West Africa.

The Department is coping with the consequences of armed conflicts, natural disasters, and massive and widespread famines.

The delivery of emergency humanitarian relief is a key component of United Nations peace-building activities. The United Nations system, along with non-governmental organizations, have channelled nearly US $6 billion annually towards such programs. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is strengthening this process, building upon the dedication, commitment and support of organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the NGO community. Together they share a common vision of placing victims first.

While prompt response to disaster and emergencies is of critical importance, it is equally crucial to invest in preparedness and prevention measures. DHA's efforts to mobilize attention and resources for such investments must continue in order to reduce the impact of emergencies and disasters on human lives and to avert material damage.

One of the most significant areas of post-conflict peace building is the elimination of over 100 million land mines, whose hidden presence causes continuing killing and maiming of innocent people. While DHA has led efforts to initiate mine clearance programs, it is also playing a key role in calling for a complete ban on the production and use of anti-personnel mines.

The current issue of DHA News presents an overview of the Department's work in 1995. For the last two years, the Department has been headed by Mr. Peter Hansen, whose energetic efforts contributed significantly towards ensuring coherence in the humanitarian work of the Organization. As he assumes his new functions as Commissioner-General of UNRWA, I thank him and wish him success in addressing the new challenges that await him. To succeed him, I have appointed Mr. Yasushi Akashi, who brings with him extensive experience not only at Headquarters but also in the field. Under his leadership, the Department will continue its valuable work towards reducing human suffering and providing hope for the future.

Mr. Yasushi Akashi has been appointed Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, effective 1 March 1996. Mr. Akashi has had a long and distinguished international career, including as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Former Yugoslavia, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Cambodia, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and Under-Secretary-General for Public Information. Mr. Akashi also served previously as Ambassador in the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations.

Department of Humanitarian Affairs,
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland
Tel.: United Nations (+4122) 9171234
DHA Emergency ONLY: (+4122) 9172010
Fax: (+4122) 9170023 Telex: 414242 dha ch
INTERNET e-mail: dhagva@dha.unicc.org
DHA on the Internet:
DHA On-Line: http://www.unicc.org
ReliefWeb: http://www.unicc.org/relief
Cover page photo: Carl Mydans -
Life Magazine c/o Time Inc.
Back cover photo: UNICEF-1995-02-06
Giacomo Pirozzi - Liberia Emergency

The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Published five times a year by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). Not an official document. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DHA. All material published in this issue may be reproduced without prior permission, provided it is credited to DHA News. Contributors are acknowledged at the end of each article.
Editorial Board for special edition:
Philippe Boullé, Mounira Skandrani,
Maité Pascual, Robert Dinsdale.
Consultant: Jean-Paul Hoareau de Montrose.
Cover design by Martin Louis Boschung.

Contents

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance in 1995

Foreword *by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary-General*
A Message *from Peter Hansen* 4

COORDINATION - A GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Addressing the Gaps and Imbalances:
the Challenge from ECOSOC 6
The Newly Independent States 8
Coordination? - a view from the field, *by Iain Levine* 10
Coordination, always finding the wrong
answers to the right questions, *by Peter Walker* 14
DHA upgrades its relief coordination capacity 16
International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
(IDNDR) 19

INTERVIEWS

Sadako Ogata, UNHCR 20
Catherine Bertini, WFP 24
Carol Bellamy, UNICEF 36
Cornelio Sommaruga, ICRC 42
Emma Bonino, ECHO 56

ACTIVITIES

Afghanistan - UNOCHA Activities in 1995 13
Humanitarian conditions in Iraq continue to deteriorate 27
Natural and Environmental Disasters: A brief review
of DHA's involvement 28
Disaster Management Training Programme 34
Water and War: UNICEF keeps Sarajevo afloat 39
Chernobyl 41
The Scourge of Landmines 5, 23, 44
Sierra Leone's Humanitarian Emergency 45
The cost of Humanitarian Assistance 46
The Crisis in the Great Lakes region:
towards better management 48
Operations Center 50
ReliefWeb 51
DHA closes its office in Tajikistan 54
The Humanitarian Summit: A call for action 58
Madrid Declaration

Message from Peter Hansen

With this issue of DHA News, I wish to send a personal message. I have recently assumed the Office of the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with a new challenge and responsibility for contributing to the consolidation of peace, and to the economic and social well-being of the Palestinian people. I leave the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, after an association of two years, with a sense of satisfaction knowing that this young and vibrant Department has made great strides in advancing the cause of humanitarianism.

In this publication you will read about the various experiences from the field and the important lessons we continue to learn from them to enable us, together with our partners, to enhance the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance directly to those who need it most and to move forward in achieving our common goal of protecting the victims of conflict.

"The Department has forged closer links with the major non-governmental organizations"

The plight of many victims in certain parts of the world is often dramatically portrayed in newspapers and television, but there are many others about whom little is reported in the press. Their suffering staggers the imagination. For instance, the general public knows little about the human tragedy in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Afghanistan. Each individual victim - of war, of natural disaster, of discrimination - suffers silently. We must speak up for each one among the tens of millions of refugees and internally displaced.

Photo: DHA/K. Toll

USG P. Hansen in Sierra Leone/1995

It is essential therefore that there is a crucible in which all actors in the humanitarian field can meld their efforts, while still maintaining their unique perspectives, to enhance the coordinated delivery of assistance to each voiceless victim. I feel that DHA has contributed significant value added to this process by acting as the facilitating and coordinating mechanism for providing relief in complex emergency situations.

In the four brief but hectic years since it was established by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in response to a call from the General Assembly, the Department has forged closer links and a unique relationship with the major non-governmental organizations working in humanitarian relief. As members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, chief NGO umbrella organizations sit with the executive heads of principal UN humanitarian organizations to take decisions on important humanitarian issues that influence policy and operations. At this very moment, for instance, senior NGO representatives are working with UN relief officials to find ways of resuming operations in Somalia. NGOs have also begun participating in the Consolidated Appeals Process which continues to grow in value both to relief agencies and to donors.

There are many important issues on the humanitarian agenda. In recent years, the international community has become increasingly aware of the scourge of over 100 million landmines that lie scattered all over the world. The UN has taken an unequivocal position on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. There can be no misunderstanding or confusion about the stance taken by the Secretary-General last year when he called for the complete elimination of this atrocity which dismembers and kills thousands of innocent people, many of whom are children.

There is significant progress with the export moratorium. At present 23 countries support a complete ban and many have responded positively to initiatives taken by DHA to make public information on the manufacturers and distributors of landmines.

This is no theoretical exercise for DHA. We also have the responsibility for carrying out demining operations in Mozambique, Angola

and Afghanistan, and perhaps soon in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In many places, these operations take place in the context of the demobilisation and reintegration of combatants - crucial steps on the road to recovery for countries which have known nothing but war for a generation or more.

Another challenge before us is that of ensuring more concrete action on preparedness and prevention. Despite the hard lessons from Rwanda on the importance of preventive action and the inability of humanitarian relief to substitute for political will, we are facing the real danger of a catastrophe in Burundi. The humanitarian organizations have made contingency plans and are actively engaged in actions geared to prevent another tragedy. We all see the early warnings. It is up to Member States to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to enable the UN to fulfill its humanitarian role. This is an area which deserves much greater attention.

While the existence of the necessary political will is an indispensable condition for the UN to be able to play its role, the Organization itself needs to institute administrative changes to allow for special procedures and measures to be taken in emergencies. We know from hard experience that the greatest suffering and humanitarian relief needs occur in the first days of an emergency. We must therefore act quickly and strongly in the initial phase of the crisis. The establishment of the DHA Rapid Response Unit in 1994 is an important step in this direction.

These and many other challenges will face my successor, Mr. Yasushi Akashi. His task will be a daunting one, but I am confident that he will address it with vigour and determination.

There is an immense opportunity for DHA to continue to develop confidence and trust in its role as a means for the humanitarian community to work together. Humanitarian action is first and foremost about saving lives. This means putting victims first. The victims and the vulnerable deserve no less. ■

DHA and Land-mines

Total elimination of land mines. The position of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the first International Meeting on mine clearance in June 1995 was unequivocal. "We must eliminate land mines once and for all" the Secretary General told representatives from 97 governments, 11 intergovernmental organisations, 16 UN bodies and 31 NGOs participating in the meeting organised by DHA, the UN focal point for coordinating de-mining and related issues. Calling for "an end to the production, trade and use of landmines as well as the destruction of all stockpiles". SG Boutros Boutros-Ghali told delegates that a total ban on land mines was the only effective measure to end the indiscriminate killing and maiming of innocent civilians and relief personnel. In January 1996, at the end of the second session of the Review Conference of State Parties to the 1980 Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, some 20 countries had joined the call for a total ban.

Some $20.6 million was pledged during the three-day meeting in June 1995 for the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance to Mine Clearance and $7 million to strengthen the UN stand-by capacity. A few months later, an additional $58 million was promised by Member States for bilateral and multilateral programmes and provision of experts, equipment, facilities and services.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali established the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance in November 1994. Managed by DHA, the Trust Fund allows the provision of resources for rapid and expanded UN action in response to requests for assistance in mine clearance. With donor support, the Voluntary Trust Fund and the UN Demining Stand-By capacity have developed into effective tools for providing quick resources in support for land mine related activities. The Voluntary Trust Fund is currently used in operations in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Yemen and operations are underway in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has proved an invaluable tool in upgrading the UN's capacity to respond to the humanitarian tragedy caused by land mines. DHA realises that although mine clearance is essential, on its own it is not enough in the struggle against land mines. Greater public awareness of the crisis, and enhanced channels of communication among demining organisations, are needed.

Box: 1

Addressing the Gaps and Imbalances:

Over the past five years humanitarian relief has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise and a staple of nightly television news bulletins. A single humanitarian emergency can involve up to 200 different relief groups, ranging from instant volunteer teams through major non-governmental and governmental organizations to the various United Nations agencies.

In 1995 there were between 30 and 40 million people depending on international assistance for their protection or survival in the face of what the UN calls complex emergencies, usually involving conflict and displacement either internally or across borders.

This massive relief effort has sucked resources away from long term development assistance forcing a re-orientation of priorities and intense debate on the links between relief and development.

The United Nations system, operating through agencies including WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF, is the major actor in humanitarian relief. In 1991, the international community, acting through the General Assembly, established the position of Emergency Relief Coordinator and proposed specific measures to improve coordination and effectiveness of the UN system's response to humanitarian crises. DHA, headed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, was formed in 1992 to implement this mandate.

Almost immediately, the new mechanisms for coordination were tested to breaking point by crises in Somalia, the Caucasus and the Great Lakes region of Africa. This Annual Review contains details of developments in some of these complex emergency operations as relief organizations continue working to mitigate the worst impacts of conflict and natural disasters.

In August 1995, the 54 governments of the UN Economic and Social Council called for a wide ranging review of the role and operational responsibilities as well as the capacities of the humanitarian agencies. The ECOSOC resolution was a response to a series of findings and recommendations in the Secretary General's annual report on the UN's progress on strengthening coordination.

The report argued that such a review would *"facilitate efforts by Members States to address possible constraints, gaps and imbalances in the system which has evolved rapidly in an* ***ad hoc*** *manner in recent years."* The resolution is aimed at strengthening the coordination role given to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. So far the tools of this coordination are: the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) which comprises the executive heads of the UN humanitarian agencies, the Red Cross movement and the major NGO federations working in humanitarian relief. Although it has reached agreement on crucial issues such as the appointment and responsibilities of humanitarian coordinators, the IASC has much greater potential.

The IASC could provide an authoritative forum for the development of policy and strategic direction in the international community's response to humanitarian work. This is not only a matter of crucial importance for the agency heads or management but also for the Member States which sit on the agency's governing boards.

If UN agencies are to work in a coherent fashion there is a need for a coordinated dialogue with the Member States on these governing boards. More coherent advice and direction given by Member States would do much to produce a more coordinated UN system in the humanitarian field and in the larger context.

That larger context includes the political and military situations that give rise to humanitarian crises and the profound concern that humanitarian relief should never substitute for political will. As well, there is increasing recognition of the need to link emergency relief with activities aimed at promoting recovery and rehabilitation.

Photo: UNHCR/C. Sattlberger

Tanzania/1995

the Challenge from ECOSOC

Too often though, funds are available to feed the victims of a crisis but not to help them restore their shattered communities. The most glaring example was in Rwanda where one billion dollars was spent in six months of frantic crisis relief but only minuscule amounts were offered to start recovery programmes.

DHA has made a number of proposals in relation to the operation of both the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). On the CERF, it asked for the establishment of a separate facility of US $30 million dollars to finance the start up phases of recovery and rehabilitation activities so that the momentum and goodwill created by a successful emergency intervention is not lost in the hand over to the post-crisis operation.

The record of the CAP has been mixed. In many cases, it has succeeded in presenting a coherent overview of agency needs in a complex emergency and in offering donors the opportunity for a balanced response. However, the response has often been uneven with some agencies and some sectors, especially food, being favoured at the expense of other needs. This selective funding is an obstacle to the UN's efforts to meet other critical relief needs such as health, agriculture, water and sanitation.

The ECOSOC resolution asks the governing bodies of UN agencies to report back on these issues - specifically on *the impact of the allocation of resources on the relationship between life saving needs, prevention, preparedness and recovery.*

With growing demands on scarce resources, there is an increasing focus on building local capacity and coping mechanisms. International humanitarian response does not change the fact that it is the people of the country and community directly involved who have the primary responsibility for their own recovery. Effective action on local organization and institution building can pay dividends in prevention of further crises and in making the transition from relief to rehabilitation.

The ECOSOC resolution also

> "There is a powerful challenge to the humanitarian community to make the best possible use of limited resources"

asked governments and agencies to consider a range of other issues including personnel training, delegation of authority to the field, operational, financial and evaluation reporting and the value of formal, operational agreements between agencies.

A central coordinating role for DHA

The resolution asks DHA to convene regular meetings with governments, UN agencies and other organizations to ensure that the matters raised in the ECOSOC resolution are coherently addressed. This work is currently underway with progress reports expected at the mid-year ECOSOC meeting in 1996 and final results due in 1997.

The review comes in the midst of a number of major studies on the impact and effectiveness of humanitarian relief operations. Each UN agency conducts or commissions studies of its major operations and donor nations have recently funded an exhaustive study on the events in Rwanda in 1994. This scrutiny is usually welcomed by both intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies which realize the need to satisfy the political and public desire for an accounting of the immense sums provided for humanitarian relief.

Time for new thinking

In all this there is no questioning the need to respond to the humanitarian imperative. There is however a powerful challenge to the humanitarian community to produce new approaches, conceptually and operationally, to make the best possible use of limited resources.

In particular, the ECOSOC review is focusing critical attention on the old idea that relief, rehabilitation and development are distinct activities, proceeding one after the other in an orderly fashion. This so-called continuum concept has been replaced by the realization that relief, rehabilitation and development activities must, in many cases, go on side by side.

The aim of the humanitarian community will be to orchestrate the three activities together to make the swiftest transition from relief to peace building and development with a view to reducing the chances of the crisis recurring.

These are challenging ideas - demanding much of governments, of the UN and of all actors in the humanitarian and development communities. There is an awareness however of the urgent need to find new answers and new approaches in the global effort of giving effect to the humanitarian principles that are supported by all Member States of the UN. ■

The Newly Independent States

By Katarina Toll, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Complex Emergencies Support Unit, DHA.

About a year following DHA's initial efforts to strengthen its presence in conflict-stricken countries of the former Soviet Union in support of the designated Humanitarian Coordinators, this challenge was successfully met.

By the beginning of 1995, a functional presence had been established in the three countries of the Caucasus - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Meanwhile, DHA's Field Coordination Unit in Dushanbe, opened in mid-1994, was beginning to monitor the implementation of the 1995 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan, which included plans for a significant phase-down of humanitarian activities in this Central Asian republic.

During the first quarter of 1995, DHA also posted a liaison officer in the office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Moscow. The main function of this officer was to facilitate coordination within the framework of the humanitarian effort initiated as a result of the emergency in Chechnya in the Russian Federation. A United Nations Flash Appeal issued by DHA early in 1995 was followed by the launching of a Consolidated Appeal, for the period from January through April 1995. This Appeal was later extended until the end of the year. By December 1995, assistance to persons displaced in neighbouring republics of Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia was still continuing by a number of UN Agencies, NGOs and other organisations.

The Caucasus: a pilot ground

In the Caucasus, the three units established respectively in Yerevan, Baku and Tbilisi were instrumental throughout the preparation of the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus, covering the period March 1995-April 1996. As part of this task, they hosted a DHA-led inter-agency mission to the region in January-February 1995. The mission included representatives from most UN Agencies operating in the region and a USAID senior humanitarian officer who followed the inter-agency mission through the mission's consultations in the three countries. As with the Appeal for Tajikistan prepared in-country during October 1994, the Appeal preparation exercise in the Caucasus encouraged wide NGO participation and a strong focus on transition-related activities, including income-generation, small-scale rehabilitation and capacity-building projects. The Appeal for the Caucasus was launched during informal donor consultations in Geneva in March 1995, which were attended by most of the DHA field representatives.

> "The need to determine numbers and categories of vulnerable groups has also been felt as most pressing"

Since the issuing of the Caucasus Appeal for 1995/96, two central themes have guided DHA's coordination activities in the region. They are intrinsically linked to one another and respond to some of the decade's most notable trends in humanitarian assistance "donor fatigue" and the call for more effective planning, coordination, delivery and monitoring of humanitarian efforts.

One of these themes is the issue of vulnerability definition in the three countries. This subject had already arisen as a major concern among the humanitarian community in mid-1994, through the DHA-led inter-agency consultations in the Caucasus and Tajikistan on strategies for humanitarian assistance in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. The experience acquired since then by DHA field staff has further strengthened DHA's

Photo: UNHCR/A. Hollmann

Tajikistan/1995

conviction that it should assist in highlighting this issue as a major concern in ensuring the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Efforts have been made, although unevenly, to address this problem. In Armenia, a USAID-sponsored programme was implemented by mid-1995 providing a system - now used by UN Agencies such as WFP and other aid organisations - to determine categories among the population who should receive humanitarian assistance. In Georgia, the need to determine numbers and categories of vulnerable groups has also been felt as most pressing. Discussions were initiated during the summer within the humanitarian community in-country and plans for a country-wide vulnerability assessment developed throughout the latter part of 1995. In Azerbaijan, where the government had just established an aid coordination arm at the beginning of 1995, no programme has yet been initiated to determine vulnerable groups in a systematic fashion.

The other focus of attention of DHA in the Caucasus has been the need for enhancing donor insight and participation in the process of assessing humanitarian requirements. Linked to this issue is the necessity to consolidate the evaluations of the UN System, other organisations and donors in order to build consensus on the priorities for emergency assistance.

The two themes were highlighted on the occasion of donor consultations which DHA organised in Geneva in October 1995 to present the Mid-Term Review of the Caucasus Appeal to donors. As a result of these consultations, DHA refined and expanded a proposal for a broad-based assessment in the Caucasus, which was initially developed during the summer of 1995. Indeed, several donors had expressed the wish to improve collaboration with the United Nations in the assessment of humanitarian needs. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia had been singled out as a pilot ground to broaden the base of inter-agency assessments which are carried out under the coordination of DHA prior to the launching of a Consolidated Appeal.

Discussions with donor representatives during the October consultations proved invaluable in order to define the objectives of the proposed "joint UN/donor needs assessment". In addition, the presence in Geneva of the Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Affairs Officers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia allowed DHA to exchange views internally

"Assessments gather analyse and depend upon both local and international capacities to update data"

on this initiative with the full involvement of field representatives and staff from DHA's Complex Emergency Division (CED) in New York and its Support Unit (CESU) in Geneva.

These discussions set the stage for the more concrete preparation of the proposed assessment, scheduled to start early in 1996. By the end of December, DHA had received indications or confirmation of the participation of some of its major donors in the exercise, in addition to field and headquarters representatives of UN Agencies and IOM. Representatives of the humanitarian community in the region would be integral parts of the assessment as well. It was also decided to organise a meeting in Tbilisi, which in addition to assessment participants would include NGOs, other organisations as well as delegations of the three governments, to discuss the findings.

It must be taken into account that the assessment of humanitarian needs is carried out in extremely dynamic environments. Rather than representing an event in themselves, assessments are processes which depend upon both local and international capacities to gather, analyze and update data and information. The presence of the UN System, NGOs, ICRC, IFRC and other organizations in the Caucasus is a strong indication of the importance the humanitarian community attaches to developing field capacity in this region, both to implement assistance programmes and monitor developments.

It is in light of this reality that DHA's efforts have been developed, during 1995, to address both the vulnerability identification issue and the need for donor involvement in the assessment of humanitarian needs. These endeavours have been directed towards exploring formulae which might be applied in different contexts, and improved over time, in order to ensure that humanitarian partners and donors have fresh information at hand and, thereby, to facilitate their decision making. It is with the principal objective of serving the humanitarian community as a whole, including aid agencies, concerned governments and donors, that DHA in the Caucasus is engaged on this course and will continue to address these issues in 1996. ■

A view from the field

by Iain Levine
Operation Lifeline Sudan

There is a very simple dilemma when it comes to coordination of humanitarian activity. Everybody claims to believe in it but no one really wants to be coordinated. This article will provide one view of what coordination should be and how to make it happen, drawing on experiences in southern Sudan where UNICEF acts as lead agency for Operation Lifeline Sudan (Southern Sector) - an operation which includes 35 NGOs.

Photo: UNICEF/IB Press

Southern Sudan

Standards of competence and conduct

As a first point, there is an evident need for accepted minimum standards for competence and conduct in humanitarian assistance and their enforcement. On one of my trips to southern Sudan, while serving as OLS health coordinator, I was asked by a young NGO volunteer who was running a supplementary feeding programme, if I could explain to her the difference between marasmus and kwashiorkor. I was shocked at her ignorance though, in retrospect, I should not have been. Recruitment standards for emergency programmes remain low and, as has often been pointed out, emergency operations remain the last bastion of the amateur.

The establishment of minimum standards of competence and conduct is the most difficult aspect of coordination and, perhaps for that reason, seems to be the most neglected. Policy standardisation is one thing - and will be discussed later - but the actual quality of services is another. A recent study suggested that 50 per cent of the

cholera deaths in Goma might have been avoided if the NGO health staff had been more experienced and competent. Coordination that fails to establish basic standards of professionalism and competence is failing at a most basic level.

Again in Goma, it was reported that some relief workers dressed children in their agencies' T-shirts for the cameras even when the agency concerned was doing nothing for those children.

Equally critical therefore is the need to establish minimum standards of ethical conduct to deal with issues such as neutrality, impartiality, accountability to beneficiaries and the need for respect for the dignity of the victims of humanitarian crises. While the Red Cross Code of Conduct for NGOs working in disaster relief, is a good step towards establishing minimum standards for the conduct and ethics of humanitarian organisations and their staff members, few NGOs seem to take them very seriously.

In my own experience, UN and NGO staff rarely are aware of the Code of Conduct - even when their organisations have formally endorsed it. The question of a mechanism for enforcing the Code of Conduct seems not to have been discussed and never seems to be part of a coordination system.

Balance needs and strengths

An essential component of any coordination effort must be the matching and balancing of needs with the strengths and weaknesses of humanitarian agencies including counterparts. This function is critical to meet needs in the most effective and efficient way possible and essentially involves the allocation of agencies - normally operational NGOs - to different geographical locations and sectoral areas to ensure that priority needs are met, matching the needs with the capacities, experience and expertise of different organisations.

This should be the most obvious and straightforward of co-ordination functions, yet the pitfalls are legion: agencies who want to do curative care because that is what they are best at when the need is for basic primary health care; agencies who refuse to work in remote locations where the needs are greatest; turf fighting and territorialism as part of the ever more difficult fight for donor funding.

The setting of standardised policies and guidelines

Different assessment methodologies which do not allow the comparison of information obtained in time and place; one agency giving supplies for free while in a neighbouring country a cost-recovery system is in place; fleets of trucks with eight different makes as NGOs provide trucks manufactured in the countries of the donor agency; different curricula for training of community health workers depending upon the NGO implementing the programmes; different policies for the care and reunification of unaccompanied minors - the examples of uncoordinated and often contradictory policies are many. Coordination mechanisms must strive towards ensuring that policies and programmes are in harmony to ensure maximum impact and to avoid overwhelming a country with a mass of contradictory and confusing actions.

"Capacity building has been a critical element of efforts towards improved coordination"

Involvement of local actors

If coordination is to ensure accountability to beneficiaries and sustainability, it must involve local actors - representatives of local counterparts, be they Governments or rebel movements, and the beneficiaries themselves. Such involvement cannot be token but needs to work towards providing a leadership role for these local actors. This may be far from easy, particularly where Governments or rebel movements are themselves far from accountable to people and where communities have been battered by sustained crisis and marginalised from decision-making by both relief agencies as well as by their own political authorities.

Capacity building has been a critical element of efforts towards improved coordination. This has involved support to organisational development, training, material and financial support to counterparts and local NGOs and, most critically, the establishment of an enabling environment in which local actors are given the opportunity to take a key role in the decisions made which affect their well-being and future. While progress has been uneven, there is little question that this is a prerequisite for the continuation of improved coordination.

Credible leadership and vision

Leadership and vision are overused and poorly defined concepts but DHA, or the lead agency involved, must be capable of defining clear objectives and principles for which the programme stands. Ultimately, the desire of humanitarian agencies to work within coordination structures and mechanisms depends upon the personal credibility of those leading the programme. The humanitarian coordinator needs to be much more than a manager. She/he must be able to inspire all those involved with vision of humanitarianism and what humanitarian assistance should seek to achieve. This demands a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different players. It also requires not only clear policies for the various sectoral programmes operating within a programme of humanitarian assistance but an understanding of the moral and political dilemmas which beset humanitarian pro-

Photo UNICEF/IB Press

Southern Sudan: teacher and his pupils at the OLS/UNICEF-assisted Torjuac Minors Camp in Nasir.

grammes and a clear definition of the fundamental principles which underpin a humanitarian programme: the right to humanitarian assistance, neutrality, impartiality, accountability, transparency and the rights for victims of conflicts and disasters to protection of their lives and dignity.

Information sharing and decision-making

Effective co-ordination requires that the lead agency and all other actors have enough information to make informed decisions. For this, a prerequisite is a credible and effective information system which allows decisions to be made based on a common understanding of needs and priorities. OLS has made great efforts to introduce standardised methodologies and information systems in the areas of food security, nutritional surveys, health, education, livestock and other programmes. Such systems are beginning to establish common understandings of the extent and dimensions of needs in different areas.

Even with such information, co-ordination cannot achieve credibility without effective decision-making and information-sharing fora. In OLS, these include sectoral meetings and workshops where decisions on policies and programmes are agreed, geographical meetings where agencies working in the same area discuss common concerns, logistics meetings where decisions are made on cargo prioritisation and *ad hoc* task forces on such issues on standardisation of pay and incentives. The success of such fora has been mixed; ultimately, their effectiveness depends upon the desire of agencies for co-ordination and the ability of the co-ordinating agency to create consensus around a shared vision and policy.

> "Effective coordination requires that the lead agency and all other actors have enough information to make informed decisions"

Coordination of humanitarian assistance has a long way to go. Greater clarity is required in the defining of coordination and the mechanisms to achieve it. Despite the growth of computerised data bases, the emphasis on good management and other attempts to provide technical improvements to the coordination process, it must be recognised by DHA that good humanitarian coordination will remain a pipe dream until it tackles the two fundamental dilemmas. Firstly, how to provide the quality of leadership required to make agencies really want to coordinate. And secondly, how to define and ensure - even enforce where necessary - minimum standards of both conduct and competence for humanitarian assistance. Therein lies its greatest challenge. ■

Afghanistan
UNOCHA Activities in 1995

Since the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, Afghanistan has been faced with a civil war causing massive destruction, mainly in and around Kabul. This resulted in the massive displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and in the further degradation of the country's already shattered infrastructure. However, as the international community's attention focused on other conflicts, funds for essential humanitarian assistance, became scarce. Afghanistan , in the words of UN Secretary -General, was becoming an "orphan conflict".

The UN/DHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) was set up in 1989 to coordinate UN humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. The UNOCHA Coordinator is responsible under DHA for this task, as well as management of four operational activities - Mine Clearance, Assistance to Internally Displaced persons, Aircraft Operations and the Radio Network.

UNOCHA issued an appeal covering the period October 1994 to September 1995 which received an unusually high donor response. The contributions pledged met 75% of the Appeals requirements. The current appeal (October 1995-September 1996), requesting US $124 million, has so far resulted in contributions of US $31 million. The components of the assistance programmes cover assistance to internally displaced persons, mine clearance, voluntary repatriation, food aid, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, emergency rehabilitation and relief management support.

For fund-raising purposes, UNOCHA organized several visits of donor representatives to project sites in different parts of Afghanistan.

Due to heavy fighting in Kabul beginning in January 1994, hundreds of thousands fled the city, mostly to Jalalabad. In 1995, UNOCHA continued to manage two of the five camps for internally displaced persons in Jalalabad which at their peak had a population of over 300,000 persons. The camp population receives international assistance, both from UN agencies and numerous NGO's including food, water, sanitation, education and basic health facilities. At present, the camp population of the two camps managed by UNOCHA is slightly over 100,000.

The past winter was particularly difficult for Kabul's citizens in view of unusually cold temperatures, almost daily rocketing and periods of blockade which have caused prices of staple foods to rise well above the average family's reach. Over 300,000 people, out of a city population of 1.2 million, are currently benefiting from WFP's food aid programme.. UNOCHA prepared and distributed the Winter Emergency Relief Plan and continues to issue updates on the situation, in an effort to urge donors to help meet increased needs. UNOCHA also negotiated unrestricted access to Kabul on behalf of the UN agencies during periods of blockade.

The presence of mines and unexploded ordnance provides a major impediment to the return of Afghan refugees to their homes in some provinces. UNOCHA's demining programme, established in 1989, has so far cleared 89 sq kms of "high priority" minefields, identified in a National Survey. Over 3,000 Afghans are employed in the Programme which has a budget of US $20 million annually.

In 1995, the focus of demining shifted temporarily to Kabul, where mines had been laid since the Soviet withdrawal. In April 1995, when many of Kabul's citizen's tried to return to their homes, numerous casualties from mines added to the misery of finding their houses destroyed. UNOCHA immediately deployed teams to clear the mines and organized mine awareness training.

Two regions of Afghanistan, in the center and in the north-east, face chronic food deficits and are prone to natural disasters. In 1995 UNOCHA organized inter-agency missions to Bamyan and Badakhashan to stimulate UN agencies and NGO's to increase their activities in these regions.

On behalf of UN agencies, UNOCHA organized visits of journalists to the five major urban centers, where they were shown ongoing programmes and unmet needs requiring further funding.

UNOCHA issues a weekly publication "Weekly Update - Assistance to Afghanistan" which is widely disseminated in the region and abroad. Annual reports are also prepared by UNOCHA, describing UN activities in all regions of Afghanistan.

UNOCHA continued to operate two small aircraft on behalf of the UN and NGO community. More than 5,000 passengers and 110 tonnes of cargo were transported in 1995.

Box: 2

Coordination, always finding the wrong answers to the right questions

by Dr. Peter Walker, Director, Disaster and Refugees Policy
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Photo: UNHCR/A. Hollmann

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Croat Serb refugees/1995

In the 15 years that I have worked for NGOs and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the issue of coordination in emergencies, or the lack of it, has persistently refused to go away. Like stock solutions for eradicating unemployment, or crime or for guaranteed economic growth and health, the cry for better coordination goes up every time the humanitarian community responds to another major disaster.

When you ask people why they believe there is a problem, and that better coordination is the solution to that problem, there are usually two schools of thought offered. One holds that bad coordination leads to inefficient operations and the waste of scarce resources. The other holds that bad coordination leads to ineffective operations and poor quality in the service delivered to disaster victims. Two different problems, same solution proposed.

If we take it as read that the two problems do exist then is coordination the common solution or at least a part of a common solution and if it is desirable, is it achievable?

Certainly one would expect coordinated action from certain groups of actors in emergencies. Or better put, disaster victims, fellow relief workers and donors have a right to expect such coordination.

Groups which share a common governance should both have the instruments for in-group coordination and a strong rational for doing it. Common governance should mean a shared set of overall goals, a shared approach to problem solving and a shared vision of a way of working.

In most disasters four such governance groupings exist, with varying degrees of cohesion: the national government and its ministries and agencies, the UN and its agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the NGOs (both international and national).

In an emergency one would expect a government to coordinate the work of its various arms, and in many cases this is what happens. Likewise, people have a right to expect the Red Cross and Red Crescent to coordinate its internal activity and again this happens. For National Red Cross and Red

Photo: UNHCR/R. LeMoyne

Bosnia & Herzegovina:internally displaced persons/1995

Crescent Societies which share the common governance of an international general assembly, relief assistance is coordinated through a system of appeals and international delegates managed and directed by the Federation's secretariat in Geneva thus allowing the International Federation to act as a single entity in humanitarian assistance.

For the UN system, governance is more complex with some bodies, such as DHA and DPKO being part of the UN Secretariat and thus answerable to the General Assembly or the Security Council, and others such as WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR having their own executive committees providing separate governance within the overall umbrella of the General Assembly.

For NGOs the situation is even more complex. There are some common governance structures though usually of a much weaker nature than those touched on above. For instance the various NGO "families" -- MSF, SCF, CARE, World Vision, Caritas etc., usually have some form of overall international structure to coordinate their work. At an even broader level their are NGO networks such as InterAction in the USA, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, or ICVA which have the potential to at least encourage coordination between their members.

But there are many NGOs who are not members of any such groupings. There are many NGOs who come into existence to serve in one emergency and disappear within a few months of the emergency ending.

Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect coordination between such a diverse group of actors, holding an equally diverse set of mandates, mission statements, goals and ideologies. And indeed there is value to be had in multiple programming which is not coordinated under one system. It guards against the possibility of a single mistake or judgement error being replicated throughout a system and given that the art of relief is to make hard decisions under pressure and with minimal information, this may be no bad thing.

"Cooperation rather than coordination is a better starting point for improving the provision of assistance"

In addition, there are a number of agencies for whom independence of action is almost a prerequisite of effectiveness. Principal amongst these is the ICRC whose actions in conflict situations require maximum independence in order to safeguard their neutrality and impartiality.

May be we would be better advised to focus our energies on the twin problems of efficiency and effectiveness. If coordination is only a partial solution then where does the rest of the solution lie? I am convinced that it lies in the realm of standard setting. Many agencies jealously guard their independent nature choosing to act when and where they think right. But the agreeing of common standards for the basic business of doing relief allows for improved system performance without jeopardising agency independence.

This is not a new idea. We all already accept shared standards in the financial field, for external auditing for instance, and where we use a common donor, for the nature of financial and narrative reporting. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and many NGOs have now accepted the shared standards of the Code of Conduct as a basis for improving the service they give to disaster victims. And moves are now afoot in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and within at least three NGO groupings to move to the next stage and set common technical standards.

Perhaps then cooperation rather than coordination is a better starting-point for improving the provision of assistance. Cooperation systems assume that different actors will have different motivations, mandates and purposes. It allows for the varying degrees of independence needed but, like traffic moving round a city (which is definitely a cooperative rather than co-ordinative system), it works on the premiss that all actors accept some basic common guidelines and standards. Not so many so as to adversely restrict independence and innovation and not so few as to allow for destructive chaos.

The challenge today is not to invent yet more models for coordination, but to identify the right areas where guidelines and standards can be more universally accepted and then to take the plunge and develop those standards. ■

To respond to increased devastation caused by natural disasters

DHA upgrades its relief coordination capacity in 1995

The number of natural and sudden onset disasters continues to increase, and their impact continues to worsen in various parts of the world. This is particularly true in developing countries. For some years now, total annual losses from disasters have exceeded the amount of international assistance available to cope with them, leading to major problems. In the last two decades, the number of persons affected by disasters increased at the rate of some 6% per year, which corresponds to three times the annual population growth. Along with ever-mounting economic losses, the inevitable result is a serious negative impact on sustainable development.

1995 claims 20,000 lives and costs US $180 billion

The economic and social impact of natural and sudden onset disasters that struck the world in 1995 should not be underestimated. There have been nearly 600 natural catastrophes which have claimed about 20,000 lives. The lives of millions of people have been disrupted and total financial losses are estimated at US $180 billion. In 1994, as a matter of comparison, 580 natural disasters claimed about 10,000 lives and financial losses were estimated at US $65 billion. The extent of the damage means that billions of dollars which could have been used for economic development will have to be spent on reconstruction and rehabilitation. In many instances, the destruction of commodity crops has resulted in a serious loss of foreign earnings for exporting countries. The Kobe earthquake in January 1995 hammered the reinsurance business worldwide, forcing reinsurers to review their policies for urban areas in seismic zones. Out of the total of US $180 billion losses in 1995, those inflicted by Kobe alone amounted to US $96 billion!*

> "There is need to ensure that the urban communities suffer the least from avoidable and unavoidable disasters"

The need for prevention and mitigation measures

The phenomenon of ever increasing urbanisation means that half of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2020. This increases the vulnerability of communities to natural disasters of all sorts. There is therefore need to take the necessary action to ensure that urban communities suffer least from the avoidable and unavoidable disasters that will strike them in the future. This is precisely one of the major tasks of DHA which works with many national organisations in programmes aimed at improving disaster prevention and preparedness in over 70 countries.

During the year 1995, much has been done by the Department to promote prevention and mitigation measures worldwide, in particular through the coordinating efforts of the IDNDR Secretariat as well as the Disaster Reduction Division. The prevention aspects of disasters and DHA's role in that field are described in "Stop Disasters"**, our sister publication. Resources available to DHA to maintain its support to natural disaster prevention programmes are still limited, totalling less than US $6 million in 1995. However, one important task in disaster mitigation undertaken last year was the training of emergency officials and sensitisation of the general public in regions where disasters may strike. Coordination of international efforts in this field was the responsibility of the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP), jointly managed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and DHA.

The need for a coordinated response

The real test in saving lives and reducing property damage comes from the quality of disaster response, once a sudden disaster hits a given community. This explains the special emphasis placed in 1995 by DHA and its

Relief Coordination Branch on creating awareness at the local level for coordination of disaster response; on ensuring a coordinated approach within the international community when disaster strikes and on introducing effective preparedness measures at the local, national and international levels.

In 1995, DHA's Relief Coordination Branch, through its Emergency Response System, coordinated the international response to 79 natural disasters, launching 25 appeals for urgently needed relief supplies, organizing 70 assistance operations from its warehouse in Pisa, and taking part in 14 on-site emergency aid missions.

Development of DHA's tools to strengthen disaster response

Effective disaster preparedness and response planning should incorporate the types of relief and assistance inputs that will be needed for communities not only to survive but to recover. During the last year, DHA has continued to focus its efforts on strengthening coordination and promoting prevention and preparedness through, inter alia, the further development of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination concept, the use of Military and Civil Defence assets in disaster relief, the Disaster Management Training Programme (see p 34) and the initiation of new projects such as ReliefWeb (see p 51). Some of the tools set in place to strengthen disaster response are presented in boxes 3 and 4. ■

Some of DHA's tools at a glance

UNDAC: To meet the need for qualified information on the situation at a disaster site and, when necessary, to assist the local emergency management authority of a country affected by a sudden-onset disaster in coordinating the work of international relief teams, DHA has established the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team, in partnership with 12 governments. When required, an UNDAC team, drawn from a roster of highly specialised professional emergency managers and DHA Relief Coordination officers, can be dispatched within a few hours of an event to carry out assessment of the damage and needs for international assistance, as well as to assist the national authorities with coordination of the international resources and relief teams that pour into the affected area. In 1995, UNDAC team were operational in Cape Verde, Sakhalin Island, DPR of Korea, Lao PDR and Indonesia. In addition, an UNDAC Regional Team was launched in Latin America, with 25 members from 6 countries, following a Regional Workshop in Quito in June 1995. The team was active in Barbados and Antigua, as well as the Netherlands Antilles towards the end of the year.

Relief items Warehouse at Pisa: The Department operates a specialised emergency relief warehouse in Pisa, Italy. Relief supplies, such as blankets, generators, water tanks, donated by various governments, are stockpiled in the warehouse for immediate and speedy delivery to the site of an emergency. Stored in prepacked form, these goods can be loaded and shipped to the disaster site in a minimum amount of time. In 1995, an agreement of cooperation was formalised with The World Health Organization and the World Food Programme for storage of medical and food items. During 1995, approx. 1, 142 million tons of relief goods - nearly 50% more than in 1994 - totalling a value of US $5 million were sent to 26 disaster sites across the world.

Emergency telecommunications: The DHA project on emergency telecommunications has three elements: (a) the facilitation of telecommunications for all partners in humanitarian aid, (b) the coordination of field telecommunications networks during emergencies, and (c) support to DHA's own field activities such as UNDAC. For the first two elements, DHA maintains the secretariat of the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), a forum of all UN entities involved in humanitarian assistance as well as other major organizations. In implementation of the respective UN and ITU resolutions, the WGET works towards the adoption of the International Convention for the facilitation of emergency telecommunications for humanitarian aid. As an important tool for contingency planning and quick response it has established an inventory of equipment and frequencies and networks in use by the major partners and defined coordination structures at field level.

(continued on p 18)

Box: 3

Some of DHA's tools at a glance

INSARAG: Ongoing consultations with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Steering Group continued throughout 1995. A meeting of the German-speaking Regional Working Group from Africa and Europe took place in November 1995, at which its report on Search and Rescue techniques was finalised. The INSARAG principle, has been defined as the establishment of an informal network which is activated particularly upon the occurrence of an emergency situation. The emergency managers who have worked together on the principles and standards for emergency response have a channel for informal consultations with their counterparts from other countries and with DHA, during the decision-making process for a response to a specific emergency. This has led to a more efficient, cost effective response and provides an opportunity for close cooperation among INSARAG members and the international emergency response resources that they represent. DHA is now preparing a publication for a wide dissemination drawing attention to INSARAG achievements such as: the development of the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) concept; the standards required of international relief teams; the responsibilities of affected and assisting countries; and the practical work carried out by the regional working groups.

Support services for the quick delivery of relief items: Within the framework of its Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, DHA maintains a database of emergency stockpiles run by UN agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Relief items from these stockpiles situated around the world may be available for international assistance at the request addressed to the stockpile holders directly or through DHA. Another important international exercise led by DHA is the implementation of Customs facilitation measures in international emergency humanitarian assistance. In close cooperation with the World Customs Organization and national customs administrations a directory of national focal points for customs facilitation in international emergency humanitarian assistance has been made and a draft Model Agreement for application of simplified customs procedures drawn, for eventual signature by national governments and the UN.

MCDA: Together with other UN Organisations, DHA has set up a programme relating to the use of Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) in support of peacetime emergency operations. Several African, Asian, American and European Governments participate in the programme which is also supported by NATO and the Western European Union (WEU). The MCDA secretariat, in cooperation with governments and defence establishments, has undertaken a major effort to improve the efficiency of relief operations by enhancing preparedness measures in management and logistics sectors. The MCDA Field Manual will soon be available and will include Standing Procedures for the alert, deployment and management of national and regional assets in a sudden onset relief operation. A multinational MCDA working group on Air operations will produce, in early 1996, a Humanitarian Air Operation Concept Manual, which is being prepared with the assistance of the International Civil Aviation Organisation, NATO, the WEU, EC/ECHO, UN Agencies and a number of nations. All the procedures codified in the above documents have been successfully tested during humanitarian emergencies, such as in Rwanda, Zaire, Georgia, Egypt, Algeria and Moldova. In June 1995, a major MCDA exercise in the Kola Peninsula was organised and hosted by the Russian Federation. It tested DHA/MCDA and IAEA procedures for nuclear disasters. 20 countries took part in the exercise.

Box: 4

* Source for all statistics in this article: The Munich Reinsurance Company (Munich Re)

**Stop Disasters is a quarterly magazine published with the United Nations' International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) Secretariat. It appears in 6 languages, and is distributed free of charge.

IDNDR: Coordination is needed in prevention too

"Coordination at its best" is the secret of *"Learning About Natural Disasters"* success. This booklet for children was produced by **The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction** (IDNDR, 1990-2000) for the 1995 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction in conjunction with the theme "Women and Children - key to prevention".

Within four months, over 150,000 copies had been distributed in six languages to schools, NGOs, universities or government programmes promoting disaster reduction. Requests have been made for the booklet to be translated in 25 more languages.

Wang Jin, an 8 year old Chinese boy, was one of its first readers. He says that during the earthquake that occurred in Tainjin city, in October 1995, he suddenly remembered the girl in the booklet: "she hid under a desk when an earthquake occurred. So I stayed under a desk to avoid the shock. Afterwards, the elders praised me because I had known how to protect myself."

How does one select convincing examples for children that encourage community action? How does one write a book about disasters that addresses people both in rural and urban areas, in developed and in developing countries?

Coordination is the answer. Efficient coordination between schools, UN agencies, NGOs, governments and the IDNDR secretariat. One thousand organisations were contacted and national education materials from several governments reviewed in order to reflect geographic balance and include a variety of sources such as, for instance, a school in Japan, an art school in central Russia and the Pan American Health Organisation. UNICEF and IDNDR worked together to develop and sponsor a game for children. National committees in Australia, Colombia, and the UN provided background pamphlets and videos. Every region of the world was involved.

Coordination also ensured the success of distribution. The World Meteorological Organisation, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation helped distribute the booklet. National Red Cross societies, from Zimbabwe to Canada joined the effort, as well as small NGOs and various emergency offices throughout the world. As for translation of the document in further languages, UNICEF Macedonia is already working on the Macedonian version, an Indian NGO has already translated it and the Iranian Institute of Earthquake Engineering is producing it in Farsi. Groups in Canada and New Zealand are helping with the reprints within their own countries, and the Swiss IDNDR committee has already made a contribution for the next reprint.

The success story of *"Learning About Natural Disasters"* has shown that concerted action and joined efforts, in an impetus of worldwide solidarity, allows a project to come to existence and reach a wide range of people learning how to reduce the impact of disasters. It also shows that low cost ideas can be developed and made available to those who need them, whether they live in a city like Yokohama in Japan or in a small village like Nevada del Ruiz in Colombia. By reaching so many young people, the IDNDR secretariat and its partners, while addressing every school child and his friend, have set into motion its motto "building a culture of prevention".

The IDNDR is a joint worldwide effort to show that "prevention pays", and to encourage people to take measures that reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Sadako Ogata:
"Development is important for both prevention

Last year in Berne, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since 1991, was awarded, among other honours, the Liberal International Prize for Freedom.
Prior to her nomination as High Commissioner in 1991 (she was re-elected on 4 November 1993, for a period of five years), Mrs. Ogata was Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo (1989-1990) and Director of the Institute of International Relations from 1987 to 1988.

Photo: UNHCR/B. Salgado

Beyond the publication of a number of books, such as, "Refugees: a Multilateral Response to Humanitarian Crises", the High Commissioner, a Japanese national, is also seen as one of the most modern and effective managers of humanitarian affairs. From UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, she comments on last year's events and responds with a certain degree of optimism to DHA Retrospective.

Question: The DHA has opted as the theme for its 1995 annual review "the coordination of humanitarian assistance in 1995." Would you comment on this theme and tell us where such coordination has worked out positively, and your criticisms, if any?

Mrs Ogata: Firstly, perhaps I should say how much I look forward to working closely with the new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and express my gratitude to his predecessor Mr. Peter Hansen for working so closely with us at UNHCR.

Perhaps the most important coordination role played by the DHA has been the production of consolidated appeals -- that is joint appeals by all the UN agencies involved in a given operation. When the individual agencies put out their own independent appeals at different times, it was easy for gaps and overlaps to occur. It was also confusing for the donors. Now donors can see all the agencies' needs at the same time. The mere fact that each agency has to submit, and defend, its own segment of the consolidated appeals means that the gaps and overlaps can be ironed out in advance. The advantages of somebody - in this case DHA - playing a coordinating role are clear. A disadvantage is that the appeals take a bit longer to put together. So sometimes, at the onset of an emergency, when delays can cost lives, UNHCR still has to rush out an appeal of its own just to cover operations for the first few weeks until the dust has settled and it is possible to put together a longer-term consolidated appeal under the auspices of DHA. This happened, for example, at the beginning of the Chechnya operation.

> "Mines are a tremendous obstacle to the repatriation and integration of refugees"

Other important DHA initiatives include its report on the effect of sanctions and its work on the land-mine issue. Individual

# of conflicts and consolidation of peace".

agencies can find it difficult to develop a coordinated common position on complex issues such as these, particularly when they extend across and beyond our individual mandates. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been campaigning very effectively on the land-mine issue for several years. Now DHA is playing a similar role for the UN -- our combined voice, if you like, on this crucial issue that affects all agencies working in the field in places like Afghanistan and Angola. Returning refugees are one of the prime victims of mines. The individual agencies can take independent actions -- UNHCR has announced it will not knowingly purchase anything from suppliers who are connected directly or indirectly with the manufacture of mines. There is now a clause to that effect written in to every contract we draw up. But we cannot really speak for the rest of the UN system on this issue. The DHA can and does speak for us all. As a result, I think we have seen the land-mine issue climb up the agenda during 1995. It is a very urgent matter. Lives and limbs of refugees, and other innocent civilians, are being lost every day to this vicious and indiscriminate killer. Mines are a tremendous obstacle to the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons in several countries.

Q: On 14 December last year, you and other leaders and representatives of prominent humanitarian agencies and donors met in Madrid. Would you say that it was a positive meeting and were you satisfied with the Madrid Declaration that resulted from it?

Mrs Ogata: I think it is always positive when a meeting of this kind takes place. The Madrid meeting was particularly unusual in that it grouped the main operational agencies of the UN along with the DHA, the two biggest donors -- ECHO and USAID -- as well as the ICRC and NGO representatives -- in other words pretty much the whole spectrum of actors in the humanitarian arena. Even though our perspectives are obviously somewhat different, we are ultimately pursuing the same goals. It was a good opportunity to reaffirm our solidarity on some of the most important humanitarian issues and to discuss some of our common objectives.

"Many of the tasks we face today are too big and multifaceted for any one organization to deal with alone"

Q: In line with its mandate and responsibility, UNHCR is committed to protect and assist the victims of persecution and conflict. In many countries, for political reasons or as a result of power struggles, human rights continue to be trampled underfoot. As a result, your task in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and others of concern to UNHCR is still not easy. What sort of decisive action can you take to ensure that your organization, guided by the principles of humanitarianism and impartiality, will be able to fully carry out its mandate?

Mrs Ogata: Human rights violations, aimed either at individuals or groups, lie at the root of most refugee situations -- and always have. However, over the past couple of years we have seen a series of particularly ugly mass violations of human rights, especially in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In some instances, the displacement of certain groups of people was the primary aim of the fighting. Recently, I have been calling on the international community to show greater resolve when dealing with violations of human rights. You need a mixture of preventive measures -- promotion of human rights and enhancement of judiciaries and law enforcement agencies -- and greater accountability: people responsible for war crimes and serious human rights abuses need to be identified, prosecuted and punished. Institutions such as the War Crimes Tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda need all the support they can get. Similarly, the deployment of human rights monitors is extremely important. Unfortunately these vital initiatives are not always supported with the necessary material and financial resources.

As far as UNHCR is concerned, we will continue to do the best we can, both in our traditional sphere of action, namely working to protect refugees in asylum countries, and in the increasing number of highly complex situations where we are working inside the countries of origin, often while the conflict and human rights abuses are still unfolding. To be impartial and moreover to be seen to be impartial are of course vital -- and not always easy in a conflict situation.

Photo: UNHCR/A. Kashmeridi

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: refugees from Krajina/1995

However, this doesn't mean you have to stay silent in the face of atrocities. In Bosnia, in the end, I think all sides realized that we were impartial and turned to us to carry out the repatriation of the refugees and displaced. Even if sometimes we criticized one side more than the others, that was more a reflection of the events taking place on the ground. Throughout the Bosnian conflict we tried to provide assistance to the needy civilians of all sides.

Many of the tasks we face today are too big and multifaceted for any one organization to deal with alone. For that reason, we are increasingly becoming involved in comprehensive plans or programmes that involve a number of key players -- and not just our traditional UN and NGO partners. There are encouraging signs of greater involvement by such enormously influential bodies such as the World Bank and the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE). OSCE has a human rights element in its mandate which makes it a suitable organization for monitoring refugees after UNHCR has returned them and overseen their initial integration -- a process that has been followed in Tajikistan. Similarly the World Bank could be a very important player in post-conflict situations where reconstruction and development are both essential to the maintaining and strengthening of peace. Both organizations are playing parts in the huge and vitally important effort to implement the Dayton peace accords in Bosnia.

Q: UNHCR is very much aware that the links between relief and development must be strengthened, but quite apart from the urgent attention needed for the relief and assistance of victims, there are many other obstacles to rehabilitation and development assistance. Were these obstacles a serious handicap for UNHCR in 1995? If so, what are your immediate plans for reducing the negative consequences of conflicts? Are you prepared to advocate, once more, for stronger collaboration between UNHCR, the DHA and other UN agencies, and how could this collaboration be improved?

Mrs Ogata: Yes, the obstacles remain. Rehabilitation and reconstruction are vital in countries that have been wrecked by conflict, and to communities containing large numbers of returning refugees. Development is important both for prevention of conflicts -- poverty is often one of the factors contributing to instability -- and for the consolidation of peace. Frequently, refugees return to a shattered homeland, where the fields are fallow and the infrastructure -- roads, bridges, water systems -- has collapsed. There are no jobs, the economy is moribund. In such conditions, it is vital to help people begin the process of rebuilding. In recent years, it has become almost standard practice for UNHCR to launch what we call Quick Impact Projects. These are small projects -- ranging from the rehabilitation of canals, roads, bridges and schools

to income-generating projects such as poultry farming or sewing classes for women. Despite the valuable role played by the Quick Impact Projects, the hand-over from UNHCR to the development agencies still tends to be awkward and slow. Humanitarian agencies are, by their nature, geared to short-term projects with immediate effects, whereas the development agencies are set up to deal with much longer-term programmes, after local and national governments are firmly in place. Certainly, anything that improves cooperation in tackling the needs of early post-conflict situations would be necessary and welcome. I would certainly advocate greater collaborative efforts inside, as well as outside, the UN system.

Q: Like most UN agencies involved in humanitarian assistance, UNHCR had to struggle, last year, to get adequate funding for the protection and assistance needs of millions of refugees. Flexible mechanisms to provide more funding for emergency rehabilitation must be found. Do you have a recipe, and if so, would you be keen to share it with all your other partners?

Mrs Ogata: We had to struggle, yes. But in the end we were more or less fully funded in 1995 just as we were for the previous couple of years -- and I am very grateful to the governments who have shown such faith in our programmes. 1995 was the fourth year in succession that our budget exceeded US $1 billion. Funding mechanisms obviously have to suit the organization in question, its aims and operational environment, while bearing in mind the requirements of its donors. I do not think there is some universal recipe that would suit all the different UN agencies. If I knew one, I would certainly share it! Having said that, a bit more flexibility would be useful. It is helpful to have funds that are not earmarked. Some donors have very stringent reporting requirements. Coping with them keeps us on our toes. It is labour-intensive, but probably a good thing for consolidating mutual confidence. Another good thing about the DHA consolidated appeals is that they show very clearly which agencies are being underfunded. To some extent we all need each other, so if one of us is unable to perform properly it inevitably affects the others -- not to mention the refugees and displaced people we are supposed to be helping. As overall coordinator, DHA can help draw attention to critical shortfalls in the funding of combined humanitarian operations.

Land mines and the United Nations

It is high time that land mines are banned.

The presence of an estimated 110 million land-mines around the world has caused a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions, killing more than 800 people per month, maiming thousands more and leaving whole countries devastated and unable to resume normal life for a prolonged period of time in the aftermath of armed conflicts. As many as 10,000 people are killed every year. The number of amputees in a country at peace, such as the United States, in relation to the whole population is one out of 22,000. In other countries such as Viet Nam, it is 1out of 2,500 people. In Uganda it is 1 out of 1,000. In Angola, 1 out of 470. In Cambodia, 1 out of 230.

The United Nations has established mine clearing programmes to eliminat some 100,000 land mines a year. However, with more than 2 million mines added every year, unless the production is stopped, clearing the Earth of all land mines is a losing battle. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has taken a very strong stand on what should be a total ban on land mines as the only effective measure to end the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians.It has drawn the attention of the United Nations General Assembly once again to the gravity of the land mine crisis and has reiterated its strong support for the Secretary-General's position that the use of land mines, their production and transfer must be banned and that those that are stockpiled must be destroyed.

At the Review Conference in Vienna, in October 1995, there has been a great deal of talk about "technical approaches" to solve the land mine crisis, but distinguishing between "good" and "bad" mines is not a solution. In all cases, years after the end of a conflict the so called "smart mines" still constitute an enormous danger to civilian populations.

It is time to look at the moral, ethical and humanitarian aspect of the problem. It is high time that land mines are banned.

(Source: DPI)

Box: 5

Catherine Bertini:
"Food aid can be very helpful in terms of

The World Food Programme (WFP) was created to combat the hunger that today afflicts one out of every seven people on earth. With a budget of US $1.5 billion, WFP's 4,000 humanitarian workers direct emergency and development operations that benefit 57 million people in 90 countries.

Catherine Bertini was appointed Executive Director of the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) in April 1992. She is the first woman to head the WFP, and from its headquarters in Rome, she guides the agency in its dual missions: prevention of starvation in emergencies and helping people become self-reliant by providing them with the means to extricate themselves from the vicious cycle of poverty.
In Rome, Catherine Bertini speaks to Jean-Paul Hoareau de Montrose for DHA Retrospective 1995.

Question: The Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) has opted for one main theme to illustrate its 1995 annual review, "the coordination of humanitarian assistance in 1995". Will you please comment on this theme and tell us where such coordination has worked out positively, and your criticisms, if any?

Mrs Bertini: The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played a major role in the coordination of humanitarian assistance with strong direction from UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and with the very able management of Peter Hansen. Both from the perspective of the operational services as well as from the donor generosity, the explosion of humanitarian emergencies has been, of course, extremely challenging to meet. So this coordination is absolutely critical, and we think DHA has been exemplary.

Q: On 14 December, last year, you and other leaders and representatives of prominent humanitarian agencies and donors met in Madrid. Beyond the Madrid Declaration, would you say that it was a positive meeting, and if so please tell us in what ways, and if such a formula should be reconducted in the coming months?

Mrs Bertini: In many ways it has been a worthwhile meeting. Firstly, because the principals were all at the table and, secondly, because it was a meeting exclusively of people whose agencies' major role is to work in emergencies. The discussion was streamlined and was very helpful for each one of us. We were able to focus very specifically on the issues, as everybody knew what their agency had to bring to the table.

There were no turf battles and thus it was really very constructive. I certainly hope that in the future there will be opportunities for similar meetings of the agencies that primarily work in emergency relief.

Q: Would you say that these meetings would lead to better coordination?

Mrs Bertini: Yes, absolutely!

strengthening an economy"

Q: As Executive Director of the WFP, in Madrid you appealed to the international community at large for urgent attention to be given to the needs and protection of all victims of armed conflict. You pleaded for the recognition of the central role played by women. Could you tell us how do you plan, within the WFP, to reassert the role of women in the planning, management and distribution of relief assistance?

Mrs Bertini: Indeed, I pleaded for the central role of women but I would like to think that anyone in the job managing WFP would do this whether they were a woman or a man. It is very clear that, in these times of strife, women, throughout the world, are the people who hold the families together. They are often the only adult in the household and are traditionally the people who gather, prepare, and serve the food.

As a result we should all emphasise the traditional role of women and support it. By getting food to women, we are providing the most efficient means to ensure that all of the family has the possibility to share in that food and thus to eat. Actually, in every new WFP programme, we are looking at the direct distribution to women.

Concerning the second part of your question, we are planning to recruit women locally to help us organise the distribution and the management of food, since they are the ones who know best about how to use the food and how to distribute it.

"we should all emphasise the traditional role of women and support it"

It is indeed true that WFP provides more direct assistance to women than any other agency. But I think others could do more to reach women. It is also true that seven out of ten of the world's poor are women and that although they do most of the work in many continents, they own just a tiny percentage of the land. In Africa, for instance, women produce 80% of the agricultural production but they own only 1% of the land. It is a fact that in rich and poor societies, the poorest of the poor are families that are headed by women.

We have a list of commitments that were made at the Beijing conference that WFP will undertake in order to assist women. We are increasing the number of women in the institution. At D-1 level and above, at other senior positions we have, over the past four years increased their percentage from 2% to 25% of our staff. We are also trying to increase the number of women at all the other levels of the programme.

Q: Food security is one of the issues which must be singled out in view of the particular importance that food has in the developing world. WFP is well aware that armed conflicts, and natural disasters, are generally serious barriers for normal food production and supplies to be assured. Will you confirm that this has been the case in 1995, and if yes, what are your plans to improve your capacity to work in the field? Will your plans recommend a larger collaboration between the WFP, other UN agencies and the DHA and how can this collaboration be best organised?

Mrs Bertini: About two-thirds of the WFP's resources go to emergencies and only one-third goes to development. This is in fact a total switch from eight years ago when it was one-third to emergencies and two-thirds to development.

The growing crises have led to a near explosion of emergencies where food is a critical need and thus the disaster relief portion of humanitarian aid budgets has climbed to more than 500% in the last ten years. We have been absolutely on the front lines and as you pointed out, armed conflicts are real obstacles as it is very difficult to move food through to those people who are in need. We have to keep finding humanitarian corridors, or make some sort of agreement with the warring factions. This is where DHA often plays a very critical role because it is indeed very helpful in negotiating with these factions and making sure that food and critical equipment can reach the hungry people.

"The growing crises have led to a near explosion of emergencies where food is a critical need"

Q: The Madrid Declaration appealed for a global campaign against hunger, which afflicts "one out of every seven people on earth". Could you give us a number of concrete examples where the WFP has invested in and supported the funding of local initiatives to carry out preparedness programmes reducing hunger and human suffering before any crisis?

Mrs Bertini: Many of our projects that are development-oriented have built-in programmes for disaster mitigation. We try to ward off the problems created by natural disasters, for example environmental protection, soil conservation, re-forestation, and water management for irrigation. We have, in addition, early warning systems to try to prevent famines. There are two such notable programmes in Zambia and Ethiopia, with a food security reserve that proved to be very helpful in 1994, in preventing widespread starvation.

Of course, there is also the issue of getting a reasonable amount of food to people, or helping people to be able to produce their own food which is an important thing to help stabilize a country and a government so that there is one less reason for people to be upset and irritated. One less reason to add to the potential conflicts for the future.

Q.: Most UN agencies involved in humanitarian assistance have had to face serious problems of getting adequate funding for their programmes in 1995. This, we know, has been particularly true for the WFP. How do you intend to reverse the situation in the future and ensure real international concern and commitment?

Mrs Bertini: When we appeal for emergency resources we don't always receive everything that is actually necessary. But I must say that the donors have been very generous in providing a great majority of the needs. We continue to have to work with donors constantly to point out the needs and to encourage them to give, particularly when it is an emergency that might not be politically popular. For development, however, we have a much larger challenge and that is to show how helpful food aid can be in terms of helping a country and an economy become strong. In other words, we must do much more in showing how we are successful in using food aids over the long term. We are also focusing on the most needy countries, thus assuring donors that the targets are critical, and that therefore their support is very important. We also want to broaden our own resource base to reach out to additional donors. ■

Humanitarian conditions in Iraq continue to deteriorate

The continuing deterioration of humanitarian conditions in Iraq, in particular in the central and southern parts of the country, where food aid and health-related requirements are rapidly increasing, remains a source of concern for the United Nations.

With regard to food aid, in addition to a caseload of 1.02 million beneficiaries identified in the 1995-1996 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal, WFP has added some 30,000 destitute persons in the North, 1.1 million persons in families with malnourished children under five, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers, drawn from an estimated four million people considered to be at severe nutritional risk, as identified by a recent FAO/WFP mission.

The increased caseload brings the overall number of beneficiaries to 2,151,000.

In the northern governorates: 1,485,000 beneficiaries, including 450,000 destitute persons, 40,000 Iranian refugees, 60,000 persons in social institutions and 765,000 beneficiaries in families which are mainly headed by women (including 153,000 malnourished children under five and 170,000 pregnant and nursing mothers.)

With regard to health and nutrition, UNICEF, WHO and WFP report that increasing numbers of vulnerable groups, mainly children, are dying of simple ailments because of malnutrition and acute shortages of medicines and medical care. Approximately 23% of children under five years of age suffer from malnutrition and constitute 39% of the current monthly deaths of about 11,000 i.e. four times that of 1991.

The cholera outbreak which started early November 1995 and claimed three lives among the civilian population in the governorate of Suleimaniyah has been brought under control.

In the northern governorates, the general security situation remains tense and volatile. On 7 December 1995, two members of the UN Guards Contingent in Iraq were killed (nationals from Poland and the Philippines) and another Guard injured (Nepal) in an explosion which took place at a fuel depot in Shaqlawa, 55 kilometers north-east of Erbil city. Thirteen civilians were killed and twenty-five injured. While the investigation is still ongoing, there is no evidence yet that the Guards were specifically the target of this attack.

On 1 January 1996, a bomb composed of 70 kilos of TNT found in a vehicle was defused in Ainkawa, a residential area of Erbil city where the majority of relief organizations are located.

Donor response to the current appeal has been limited with US $ 69 million pledged or received for U.N. activities against revised appeal requirements of US $169,3 million.

In addition some US $76,6 million have been pledged/received in support of NGO/bilateral programmes, mainly earmarked for the northern governorates.

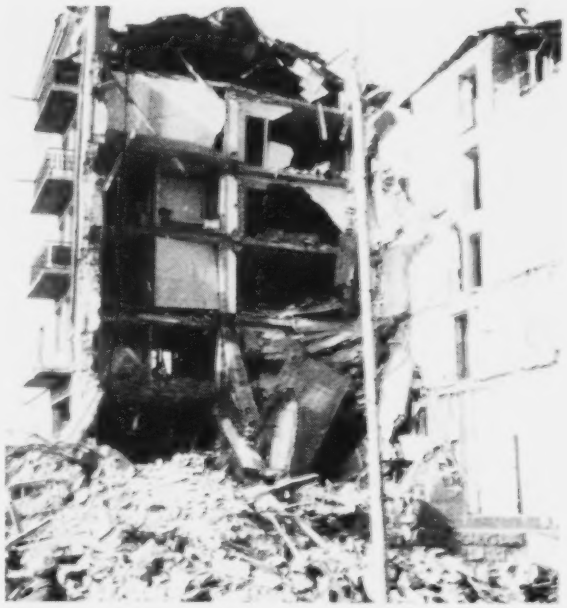
In view of the need for continued humanitarian assistance throughout the country, a new appeal for the period April '96 to March '97 is under preparation and will be launched at a Donor Consultation Meeting on Iraq, to be held in Geneva around mid-April 1996.

Photo: ICRC/P. Dutoit

Natural and Environmental Disasters in 1995: A brief review of DHA's involvement

Earthquakes

Some 200 large magnitude earthquakes usually occur in a decade - an average of 20 each year. As the world's population is increasing, areas previously almost uninhabited are becoming increasingly settled and the propensity for earthquakes to cause damage increases. At the beginning of the century, less than one in three large earthquakes caused casualties. This number has gradually risen throughout this century, and in the 1990s, two earthquakes in every three have killed. Predicting earthquakes is still a frontier science. So far, only two have been predicted with some accuracy.



DHA's missions and lessons learned

The Great Hanshin Earthquake (Kobe)

Given that Japan has sufficient rescue and medical personnel to respond to emergencies as well as an abundant supply of consumer goods, it did not request international relief assistance. However, DHA provided information to the international community and sent a fact finding mission to the disaster site after the immediate relief phase was over, to assess the international response to the earthquake. A report was issued, highlighting the lessons learned and the specificities of an earthquake in a densely populated modern metropolitan area for which the immediate relief needs are somewhat different from those for disasters in medium-size cities.

List of earthquakes in 1995

Place	Magnitude	Date	Dead	Injured
Japan	7.2	January	5,502	41,500
Colombia		January	1	
New Zealand	7	February		
Colombia	6.5	February	34	200
Cyprus	5.8	February	2	12
Colombia	5.1	March	8	4
Indonesia	6	March		
Philippines	7.3	April		
Indonesia	4.7	May	2	53
Russian Fed.	7.5	May	1,825	406
Greece	6.1	June	26	60
Chile	7.8	July	3	18
Myanmar/China	6.2	July	2	36
China	6.4	October	20	
Turkey	6.1	October	101	348
Ecuador	6.9	October	2	5
Indonesia	7	October	84	2,256
Mexico	6.8	October	40	0
Turkey	5.6	December		

Russian Federation: Sakhalin earthquake

On 27 May, the island of Sakhalin in far east Russia was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale. The city of Neftegorsk was completely devastated. 1,825 people died, 406 were injured and 1,189 made homeless, out of a total population of 2,970. Due to the extension of the damage and to the fact Neftegorsk is an earthquake prone area, the Russian authorities put aside the idea of rebuilding the city, and decided to relocate the survivors elsewhere on Sakhalin Island. At the request of the Russian Federation, a four-member United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team (UNDAC) was dispatched to the disaster site immediately to identify relief needs and assist in the coordination of international assistance. DHA provided US $50,000 to assist in meeting the victims' priority needs and organized a relief flight from its Pisa warehouse.

The Great Hanshin Earthquake (Kobe)

In 20 seconds the Great Hanshin Earthquake killed more than 6,000 people. Financial losses total US $96 billion. Of all natural disasters which struck in 1995, the Kobe earthquake will long be remembered as the "Great Killer of the Year".

Earthquakes are almost impossible to predict. Even if some regions are known to be at risk, no one can tell exactly when and where the next tremor will take place. We cannot avoid them but we can learn to become less vulnerable. . Preparedness can always be improved, even in the most technologically advanced countries such as Japan. What is necessary is the courage to learn, the will to act, and the ability to distinguish between preparedness and paranoia.

No country can ever be well prepared enough. As an archipelago used to seismic shock, Japan was constantly aware of the earthquake menace and spent US $100 million a year in prediction measures. A few weeks before the quake struck, and after a series of surprise tremors, Japan's earthquake's watchers said they would increase efforts to predict earthquakes but were still optimistic about obtaining an early warning before the feared "Big One" hit Tokyo. Japan constructed buildings supposed to withstand big earthquakes, following strict guidelines adopted by the Government in 1981. Billions of yen have been spent in designing "quake-proof structures".

However, no engineer can design a building that remains standing when all the earth underneath it vanishes. In Kobe, the building codes in place helped mitigate the effects but could not avert the disaster. Technology will never free the world from all risks, but more and more lives will be saved through the constant improvement of building regulations. The example of Kobe proved that - as in all earthquake-prone countries - existing codes must be reviewed constantly. At the same time, it also proved the efficiency of these codes. Most of the city's newest blocks did not collapse.

The Hanshin (Kobe/Osaka) area had not witnessed a major tremor over the past 80 years - and was considered far less earthquake-prone than Tokyo. No signs indicated that such a disaster would strike the region with such intensity and so suddenly. In Kobe, damage caused by the earthquake was far beyond the experts' and official expectations. Moreover, the prospect of the "Big One" in Tokyo somehow diverted the Government's attention from other regions prone to frequent but less spectacular tremors. "We were not prepared for this, because we never thought a quake of this magnitude could hit the Kansai area," said a Kobe citizen, "natural disasters come when we forget."

Predicting earthquakes is still a frontier science. It is not like a weather forecast which will advise you to take your umbrella with you today. Only two quakes have been predicted with "some" accuracy so far: in Haisheng, China in 1975, and in Mexico in 1978. From Ancient Greek scientists interpreting "magneto-telluric" waves, to theories which predict that large quakes in the Pacific will trigger others in the region three decades later, experts admit they are feeling their way in the dark. The Kobe quake has brought into evidence the fact that very little can be foreseen about what is going on under the earth's and sea's surface. Earthquakes remain an untamed mystery. Even if some areas are more exposed and vulnerable than others, no region on earth is hundred per cent safe from the threat of a sudden natural disaster.

Japan's worst quakes

		Dead	Richter Scale
1923	Kanto plain	140,000	8.2
1927	Kita Tango	2,925	7.2
1945	Mikawa	2,300	6.8
1946	Nankai	1,330	8.0
1948	Fukui	3,770	7.1

(Sources: Kobe DHA Report/Reuters/Le Monde/The Economist)

Volcanoes

Volcanoes affect the lives of people both negatively and positively. Any volcanic eruption, whatever its degree of violence, can be dangerous to people in its neighbourhood. Yet, during their period of inactivity, volcanoes attract human settlement because of the fertility of volcanic soils and the often spectacular beauty of volcanic landscapes. Large numbers of lives and large economic investments may therefore be at risk when an eruption occurs. One cannot abandon all settlements in the areas where volcanic hazards exist; what is important is to learn to live with them as safely as possible.

Cape Verde volcanic eruption - Fogo Island

On 3 April the volcano erupted, spewing lava through several fissures outside the main crater. A reduced number of small villages in the basin around the main cone were engulfed by the lava destroying 10% of the basin soil and causing the displacement of 1,300 people. DHA, in response to an international appeal launched by the government of Cape Verde provided an emergency grant of US $30,000 for the purchasing of relief goods, dispatched a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team to the disaster site and organized two flights from its Pisa Warehouse. Contributions channelled through DHA amounted to approximately US $470,000.

Montserrat

More than 100 years later, Chances Peak volcanoe wakes up. 6,000 people had to be evacuated when ash clouds descended on the capital town of Plymouth and neighbouring villages, with eruption columns reaching 1,500 metres above the rim of the crater. 15 information reports were issued by DHA which reported total contributions of approx US $3,000 . At the end of the year, the volcano was still active and 4,000 people were still living in temporary shelters. A mission was undertaken by DHA in order to encourage more systematic lesson-learning exercises and discuss ways to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and alert systems.

Volcanic eruptions in 1995

Place	Date	People affected
Cape Verde	April	1,300
Montserrat	July	
Nicaragua	Nov.	12,000

Floods/Landslides

The number of "floods of the century" in any hundred year period has ranged from 1 to 13. One of the causes could be rising temperatures, which seem to be leading to flood-producing rains and the release of energy-fuelling windstorms and hailstorms. Among all the natural phenomena capable of producing disasters, flooding is by far the most significant in causing loss of human life. The severity of such disasters is often increased by the after effects: diseases and starvation. Major flood disasters have occurred throughout the history of social development but despite inconvenience and tragedies, people continue to live in flood plains which are increasingly undangered.

There are two types of floods : river floods and coastal floods. Coastal flooding can be caused by cyclones leading to storm surges, and by off-shore earthquake-induced tidal waves, known as tsunamis.

Landslides may be considered one of the worst consequences of other natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods or storms. They are more widespread than other natural disasters, and, over the years, may cause more property loss than any other geological hazard. In many developing regions, slope failure constitutes a continuing and serious impact on the social and economic structure.

Azerbaijan - Floods

Torrential rains and floods hit the country in early October. This was the third natural disaster since June: On 7 June, hail storms followed by torrential rains caused floods and landslides. On 21 June, a sea surge along the Caspian Sea flooded regions in the South. Approximately 16 million people were affected and material losses reached US $10.7 million. Total contributions reported to DHA amounted to about US$ 890,000 out of which approximately US $635,000 were channelled through DHA which issued several situation reports.

China Floods:

The flooding arrived so quickly ... and some of the houses melted away with the flooding because they are just made of dirt ....

The Chinese people, living on river deltas and along various water-ways, lakes and canals, are familiar with heavy rains and floods and, being constantly warned, are usually prepared. In 1995, however, the floods arrived earlier and caught everyone by surprise. Thanks to the extraordinary mobilization and solidarity of its population, the country's disaster response was extremely efficient despite limited material resources. However over 1,000 people died, 4.7 million became homeless and a total of 111 million were affected in the Lianoning and Jilin north-east provinces of the country. Total damage reported to DHA amounted to $ 4 billion.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Floods

After the heaviest rainfalls of the century in July and August 1995, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea suffered widespread flooding, leaving over 100,000 families homeless. 75% of DPRK and 5.2 million people were affected by floods. 500,000 persons were made homeless. Total damage caused was estimated at more than US $15 billion. For the first time, stepping out of its policy of self-reliance, DPRK asked for UN assistance. A UN Joint Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team was dispatched to the country and DHA launched an appeal. By the end of 1995, US $4.8 million were pledged out of a total US $20 million requested in the appeal.

In response to a request from the Government of DPRK, on 29 August, a four-member UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) was dispatched by DHA to assist in the assessment of the

Lao Floods

Local coordination must be backed up by effective national strategies and structures, notes DHA/UNDAC team following floods in Lao's People Democratic Republic.

When the UN's Resident Coordinator in the Lao People's Democratic Republic contacted DHA on 13 September for assistance in assessing the impact of flooding in the country, he did not expect such a swift response. On 18 september, a four-member UNDAC Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team arrived in the country. The floods were reported to be the worst in more than 30 years. The UNDAC team identified three categories of flood impact: areas flooded for less than a week, which would not destroy rice crop, areas flooded for more than a week, where it could be assumed than 100 per cent of the crops were destroyed, and areas that had been extensively flooded for several years successively. *If the damage wrought by the 1995 floods is not to be repeated in 1996, prevention and preparedness activities are critical,* says Gerard Le Claire, leader of the UNDAC team. Addressing this issue, the UNDAC Mission recommended that DHA's Disaster Reduction Division and Disaster Management Progragmme be involved in developing strategies which the Government can incorporate into the national disaster management system.

Floods/Landslides in 1995

Place	Disaster	Date	Dead
India	Avalanches	January	63
Botswana	Floods	March	20
Afghanistan	Lanslides	March	350
Paraguay	Floods	March	0
Argentina	Storms	April	6
Bangladesh	Storms	April	119
Indonesia	Floods	May	51
Sri Lanka	Floods	May	1
Bangladesh	Rainstorms	May	0
Ethiopia	Floods	May	27
Tanzania	Floods	May	3
Paraguay	Floods	June	0
Azerbaijan	Torrent. rains	June	
Bangladesh	Floods	June	66
Nepal	Landslides	June	85
China	Floods	July	1,179
Azerbaijan	Floods	July	n.a.
Georgia	Floods	July	1
Ghana	Floods	July	40
Togo	Torrent.rains	July	0
Pakistan	Monsoon rains	July	451
China	Floods	August	n.a.
Morocco	Floods	August	230
Korea North	Floods	August	70
Korea South	Floods	August	36
Philippines	Floods	September	48
India	Floods	September	n/a
Laos	Floods	September	0
Myanmar	Floods	September	51
Benin	Floods	October	10
El Salvador	Floods	October	5
Costa Rica	Floods	October	0
Azerbaijan	Rain +Floods	October	5
Vietnam	Floods	September	85
Thailand	Floods	October	231
Turkey	Floods	November	62
Somalia	Floods	November	20
South Africa	Floods	December	161

situation. The UNDAC team was joined by representatives of WHO, UNICEF, WFP and FAO. The disaster assessment mission reported that North Korea's most needed relief items such as food, clothing and medicine as well as shelter. In agreement with the Government and the Central Floods Damage Rehabilitation Committee, the team set up office with UNDP in Pyongang. Three categories of damage were recorded by the team: immediate effects on the displaced population, agricultural losses and long-term economic impact. At the end of the year, a DHA team was still present in the field to further assess relief needs.

Cyclones, Hurricanes, Typhoons

The terms "hurricane", "cyclone" and "typhoon" refer to the same catastrophic phenomenon - a severe depression that causes high and very destructive winds. Typhoons are most likely to occur in the inter-tropical zones and especially in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. They are fortunately almost unknown in Europe. Cyclones appear only over warm seas (above 27 degrees centigrade). The cyclone's energy is released as rain generates furious winds to fill the central depression (the "eye" of the cyclone). Tropical storms are those accompanied by winds of less than 120 km/h.

The Caribbean

The second worst hurricane season ever recorded kept disaster relief officials in the Caribbean extremely busy in 1995. After several near misses, on 4 September Hurricane Luis swept down onto the Commonwealth of Dominica. Then for a couple of days it crashed onto Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Netherlands Antilles. Five persons were killed, 166 injured and more than 70,000 were affected by "Luis" which caused extreme damage totalling over $ 1billion. A week later Hurricane Marilyn passed over Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Virgin Islands, Dominica and Montserrat.

DHA tracked the hurricanes from the beginning, issuing information reports as the extent of the damage became more visible. Following requests from governments, DHA launched appeals for international assistance and deployed two UNDAC teams to the Netherlands Antilles, Antigua and Barbuda for assessment and coordination missions.

Cyclones/Hurricanes/Typhoons in 1995

Disaster	Date	Place	Deaths
Hurricane Erin	August	Bahamas	0
Hurricane Erin	August	Cuba	0
Hurricane Luis	September	Caribbean	5
Hurricane Marylin	September	Caribbean	0
Storm Sybil	October	Philippines	35
Tropical Storm Zack	October	Philippines	88
Typhoon Angela +floods	October	Philippines	722
Typhoon Zack	November	Vietnam	253
Cyclone	November	Bangladesh	0
Cyclone	November	Bangladesh	0

Philippines

Tropical storms "Sybil" and "Zack" and Typhoon "Angela" raged across the country between October and November. "Angela" was the worst storm to hit the Philipppines since Typhoon "Nina" which killed more than 1,000 people in 1987. Confirmed casualties reported to DHA amounted to approximately 840 dead and US $277 million material damage.

In light of the impact of "Angela" and "Zack", several economic analysts have revised downward their estimates of growth for the Philippines' economy in 1995.

Environmental Emergencies

With expanding populations and fast spreading industrialization, human and natural systems have become intertwined. Just as we are learning to prepare for and mitigate the effects of natural disasters such as earthquakes, we face new threats from natural consequences to human activities. The distinction between "acts of man" and "acts of nature" has blurred. On the global scale there is the debate about climate change. At local levels, logging of forests can damage the soil's ability to hold together and retain water. The results include landslides, flooding and loss of productive land. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) calls these hybrid disasters "Na-Techs" - where man and nature combine with often devastating results.

Children playing in polluted water in Ecuador

Photo: UNICEF/Hdz

DHA/UNEP Unit provides coordinated assistance in environmental emergencies

For the first time, the UN brought environmental expertise into the framework of humanitarian response with the establishment of an environment unit within the Relief Coordination Branch of DHA in 1994. Since then, the Unit has provided assistance to emergencies in Ukraine, Albania, Mozambique, Romania and Djibouti as well as organizing the UN assessment mission of the major oil spills in the Komi Republic of the Russian Federation. The Unit combines knowledge built up by UNEP with DHA's special assistance mechanisms developed over years. When a disaster occurs, the Environment Unit promptly alerts the international community and issues periodic updates to an extensive list of world contacts. The Unit can quickly put the affected country in direct contact with donors who are ready and willing to help. The Environment Unit works closely with other UN bodies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Maritime Organisation as well as the European Union which can provide assistance in specific emergencies. It also cooperates on a daily basis with related UNEP partners such as the Industry and Environment Office, the Secretariat for the Basel Convention, the Global Resources Information Database and Earthwatch.

List of Environmental Emergencies/ Fires in 1995

Place	Date	Disaster
Russian Fed.	April	Gas explosion
Myanmar	April	Fire
Ukraine	June	Waste waters spill
Guyana	August	Cyanide mine waste spill
Rwanda	September	Chemical accident
Slovenia	December	Fire

Ukraine: waste waters threaten the health of two million inhabitants. International assistance needed. DHA responds

Heavy rainfall at the end of June gave the final blow to Karkhove's sewage system. Waste waters were discharged into the rivers Ouda and Severky dones and drinking water was polluted. The threat of sewage-related diseases outbreak, including cholera, salmonella, dysentery and hepatitis A, put the authorities on full alert and international emergency assistance was requested to help cope with the disaster. Responding to the Ukrainian appeal, NATO provided water pumps donated by several countries, WHO and the Federation sent medicines and disinfectants and released funds for local purchase of some commodities.

Following a specific request from national authorities, DHA released an emergency grant of US$40,000 for purchase of water monitoring equipment. Several situation reports were issued. In close contact with the UN Office in Kiev, DHA monitored the situation in Kharkov through the joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit.

Disaster Management Training Programme: A major tool for mitigation, preparedness and response

Photo: UNHCR/R. Le Moyne

Bosnia & Herzegovina: internally displaced persons/1995

The Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) jointly managed by DHA and UNDP has been running successfully since 1990. The Programme was launched in response to the oft-repeated need for a broad international effort to bring coherent training for the management of natural disasters as well as complex emergencies. DMTP provides workshops at a managerial level for broad audiences including UN and country authorities, national and international NGOs, donors and other actors in emergencies and disasters.

Over the five years of its existence, the UNDHA/UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme has addressed disaster-management issues worldwide, in particular preparedness, mitigation and response to natural and man-made disasters.

DMTP activities include institution building, networking between institutions and individuals, production and dissemination of training materials, research, training of trainers, workshops, and concrete follow-up programmes to workshops.

A total of fifty-two workshops have now been held at the country and regional levels. During 1995, country workshops were held in Cuba, Eritrea, Mozambique, Azerbaijan and Papua New Guinea and a sub-regional workshop for countries of the Arab Maghreb Union took place in Morocco.

Workshop follow-up reports and syntheses of activities have been completed for the African, Middle Eastern and Asian and Pacific regions.

At the beginning of 1995, the Disaster Management Programme moved into its second phase with as its central goal the reduction of vulnerability to disasters and emergencies. "DMTP II" contributes to a better understanding of the link between disasters/emergencies and development by demonstrating, on the one hand, the impact disasters can have on development

programmes and, on the other hand, how development and recovery programmes can be designed to decrease vulnerability and promote sustainable development.

As a result of DMTP workshops, seventeen countries have requested funding for mitigation/preparedness projects.

Looking ahead with DMTP

Today DMTP is at an important stage. From its beginnings in 1990, DMTP has evolved into an important source of training and support for technical co-operation and strategic planning. However, despite the accomplishments of DMTP much remains to be done. The current state of disaster mitigation and humanitarian assistance demonstrates the need for the DMTP effort to be developed and sustained.

In order to accomplish this, DMTP II will focus on the following three principal objectives :

- Improving the effectiveness of disaster and emergency management in selected countries;
- Strengthening the disaster/emergency management capacity of the UN system;
- Enhancing disaster/emergency management capacity of other international and regional bodies and institutions.

The following are some examples of important project proposals aimed at improving disaster management abilities at country/regional levels:

Azerbaijan - a project (US $100,000) aimed at reinforcing the Working Group for Humanitarian Organizations - which is the governmental structure dealing with the management and co-ordination of humanitarian assistance provided to refugees, IDP's and other vulnerable groups - was approved by UNDP following the DMTP Country Workshop in June 1995.

Botswana - UNDP approval of US $50,000 to strengthen household drought surveillance mechanisms; another project proposal for strengthening disaster management in the country is with the Government of Botswana prior to approval by UNDP.

Chile - UNDP has approved a US $276,000 disaster-mitigation project.

Guatemala - UNDP has approved a US $98,000 disaster-preparedness project.

Iran - approval of a US $250,000 project for strengthening the National Disaster Plan.

Kenya - UNDP approval of US $36,000 to support the Task Force, Office of the President, to develop a national disaster-preparedness strategy.

Lesotho - Disaster-Management Project approved by UNDP for US $353,000 IPF funding.

Peru - UNDP approval of US $49,000 for cholera information system and another US $100,000 for co-ordination of response for internally displaced.

Swaziland - a draft project proposal for strengthening the disaster-management capacity of the Government has recently been submitted to UNDP for approval.

Tanzania - Project proposal for a disaster-preparedness programme.

Turkey - UNDP approval of US $98,000 to support disaster preparedness through Kizaly (Turkish Red Crescent Society).

Uganda - Project proposal to support the development of disaster management policy, planning, legislation and training at the country level has recently been submitted to UNDP for approval.

Box: 6

Photo: UNHCR, Sullivan

Tanzania: Rwandese refugees fetching water from a puddle/1995

Interview

Carol Bellamy:

"We don't see any contradiction between

In May 1995, Carol Bellamy took office as only the fourth Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund in its 50 year history. She succeeded James Grant who died shortly after he stepped down in January. Ms. Bellamy came to UNICEF from directing the US Peace Corps. She is known for her long standing commitment to the issues of health, nutrition and education.

Ms. Bellamy recognizes the importance of emergency relief but makes a strong argument for measures to prevent crises and for funding for rehabilitation and recovery programmes.

Question: DHA has opted for one main theme to illustrate its 1995 annual review, *"the coordination of humanitarian assistance in 1995"*. Will you please comment on this theme and tell us where such coordination has worked out positively, and your criticisms, if any?

Ms. Bellamy: I think this is a very appropriate theme. It is part of UNICEF's mandate to protect the rights of children in emergencies, and we work closely with DHA; exchanging information and monitoring the situation, in order to do this. We also issue joint appeals with our sister-agencies in the UN system under DHA's leadership. I believe that cooperation between UN agencies was a significant factor for humanitarian work done over the past year in such countries as Yugoslavia, Rwanda or Liberia. Cooperation is essential as the agencies have complementary expertise and complementary mandates. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement and development. The UN agencies are working on agreements to solve these problems.

"We do not expect wars to disappear overnight but easing the plight of children in war is attainable"

Q: On 14 December, last year, you and other leaders and representatives of prominent agencies and donors met in Madrid. Beyond the Madrid Declaration, would you say that it was a positive meeting? Could you tell us in what ways and if such a formula should be reconducted in the coming months?

Ms. Bellamy: The Madrid meeting was an important step in trying to consolidate, promote and ensure respect for internationally ratified rules and codes of conduct for parties as well as to humanitarian workers involved in conflicts. We do not expect wars to disappear overnight, but easing the plight of children in war is attainable and the Madrid meeting was a vehicle for this purpose. One example is the conflict in southern Sudan, where UNICEF has succeeded in promoting acceptance of a code of conduct for all parties to the conflict, which include principles of assistance and protection for children.

The meeting was also important for reminding the world of some less known emergencies, like Georgia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. These countries suffer immensely, and it is important that the international community remembers its obligations towards these "forgotten emergencies."

development and humanitarian relief"

Q: In most armed conflicts, whether it be in Africa, or elsewhere, in Bosnia or Afghanistan, for instance, basic principles of international humanitarian law are often disregarded, and among other victims, innocent children and their mothers are murdered or traumatized. What hopes do you have to continue reducing the severity of humanitarian crisis?

Ms. Bellamy: It is true that in conflicts women and children are often the ones who suffer the most. However, I am confident we can reduce the severity of humanitarian crises. In many countries, UNICEF supports programmes that alleviate the suffering of children in emergencies. For example, we attribute great importance to trauma healing programmes for children who have witnessed killings and other forms of terror, and to peace education initiatives.

I hope that the international community can learn from the past crises, and I see signs of an increased focus on crisis prevention. Think how the estimated US $2 billion spent in the first two weeks of the emergency in Rwanda could have been used for basic development initiatives in health and education. Also, I think that the creation of early warning systems is a very important tool.

I also see hope in the fact that there is increasing international recognition of the harm that landmines do to innocent children and women. This is one of the most devastating weapons, killing and maiming children indiscriminately.

"we attribute great importance to trauma healing programmes for children"

UNICEF includes a paragraph in the contracts with suppliers to ensure that we do not knowingly do business with companies engaged in the production, research or development or marketing of anti-personnel land-mines.

Q: UNICEF is known for its action in sustainable development, but armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, as well as disasters, are beyond doubt serious obstacles to development assistance. Was this a serious handicap in 1995 for UNICEF, and if yes what are your plans to reduce the negative consequences of this crisis? Will you again advocate a larger collaboration between DHA and other UN agencies and how can this collaboration be best organized?

Ms. Bellamy: In UNICEF we don't see any contradiction between sustainable development and humanitarian relief. In the organization, we talk of the continuum between relief and development. In most countries UNICEF is already there before the onset of an emergency, and we will still be there when an emergency

Photo: UNICEF/ Liberia Project

A girl and boy on each side, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy stands with local staff and a crowd of children outside the UNICEF-assisted primary school in Moulton Corner, a neighbourhood outside Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, where 1,000 people, displaced by the civil conflict, now live.

Photo: UNICEF/G. Pirozzi

Accompanied by local officials, children, UNICEF and other relief workers, Ms C. Bellamy visits a UNICEF-assisted camp for displaced people in the coastal city of Buchanan, Liberia.

situation is over. The vaccines that children receive during an emergency are still active when the crisis is over, the borehole of a former refugee camp can be used by the local population. However, one of the problems we do face is that in some countries, and here I will use the example of Somalia, the situation is neither a full-scale emergency nor a "normal" development situation since basic government structures hardly exist. Donors tune their budgets to either emergencies or development, not to something in between, which means that it is difficult for us to raise the necessary funds. In this case, a country falls between the cracks, and the children suffer. This is one of the problems we hope to work on with donors in the coming year.

Q: In Madrid, the Declaration appealed that children should not be deprived of their home and family, of their right to life, of health and education and that they should be allowed to have a peaceful existence. Do you have you examples of situations where UNICEF, in 1995, in collaboration with DHA, has been able to help implement these basic rights?

Ms. Bellamy: DHA has been very supportive of our actions in favour of children. In Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) *(see page 10)* DHA supports negotiations for access. In Rwanda, DHA's coordination of NGOs has been of enormous importance, and DHA is a key actor in Angola in moving forward both demining and demobilisation operations --both of which have a critical impact on children. UNICEF is the lead agency in Northern Iraq where --together with DHA- we provide key support to child health and education programmes.

Q: Most UN agencies involved in humanitarian assistance have had to struggle, last year, as in the preceding years, to get the adequate funding for emergency rehabilitation. Was it the case of UNICEF, and if not, what is your recipe and can it be copied by other agencies?

Ms. Bellamy: The response to the UNICEF component of some DHA appeals, among them, Iraq, Sudan, Liberia and Afghanistan reflects huge unfunded needs for children, whose status declined dangerously in 1995 and will continue to do so in 1996. The fact is that the rehabilitation needs of children and their families in post and protracted disaster situations far outstrip the resources made available both from governments and from private sources through UNICEF's National Committees. In addition to regular funded development activities which can be implemented in post crises situations, UNICEF will continuously monitor the status of children in all of these countries, complementing our development efforts with emergency support when funds are forthcoming.

DC ■

Water and War: UNICEF instrumental in keeping Sarajevo afloat

by Jean-Michel Stoullig

SARAJEVO - "I will be thankful until the end of my days". The reason why Ramiz Vraco, jerrycan in hand, expresses his gratitude is water. After a painful 40-month-old siege, this elderly resident of the Bistrik area is at last able to fetch clean current water with reduced risks to his own safety in this hilly suburb of Sarajevo.

From now on, and whatever may happen, Mr. Vraco, 61, can use one of the various taps from "Teresija 1", a big concrete water tank with purification equipment, instead of queueing at a nearby five-century-old well. Teresija 1 also offers a measure of protection, because until the recent peace agreements, the queueing residents "always ran the risk of being shelled or shot at by Bosnian Serb soldiers from the overlooking cliffs", he said. Snow is hiding the scars of war in this lovely district of wooden houses, but Mr. Vraco's own home in Bistrik has been destroyed.

> "The destruction of the water system has had appaling consequences for the whole population, especially

Financed by a donation from the Austrian city of Innsbruck, the system was inaugurated by UNICEF in November 1995 as part of its major drive to maintain safe water throughout the war in Sarajevo. One of UNICEF's mandates is to help provide safe water and sanitation, in order to maintain children's health in the world. While this action generally concerns rural areas, it became essential for Sarajevo and other urban areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina (like Tuzla and Zenica) because of the suffering of civilian populations.

"Since the start of the war in May 1992, water has been used as a weapon of war", says Zlatko Sahadzic, UNICEF Assistance programme officer in Sarajevo. In particular, the Bosnian Serbs cut off the valves of Bacevo, traditionally the main water supply for the city.

"The destruction of the water system has had appalling consequences for the whole population, especially women and children". Bouts of dysentery and hepatitis had their origin in contaminated water, both in government- and Serb-held areas. Only a month after the beginning of the conflict, 30% of the water pumps were already out of use.

"We were the main actors for water maintenance in Sarajevo; because of our inputs 70% of Sarajevans now have direct access to clean water", says Shamsul Farooq, UNICEF's Senior Programme Officer for the Former Yugoslavia.

With international partners, UNICEF distributed, among other things, three million individual purification tablets in the summer of 1993. Chlorine powder, less dangerous to transport in a conflict than chlorine gas, was brought in massively. 110 hand pumps (given by Italy) have been installed in Sarajevo to be used during the frequent power cuts. Solar purification pumps (from Care Canada and the Canadian government) have been installed, notably in two hospitals. A series of big collapsible tanks has also been put in place. Three huge pumps had to be sent by plane for repairs to Germany in January 1995. Teresija 1 provides water to 10,000 people in Bistrik at a cost of 70,000 DM.

is part of a project to tap the water from nine natural wells for 30,000 inhabitants.

In November 1994 to facilitate a more regular distribution of water, UNICEF helped rehabilitate the secondary reservoir of Mojmilo with 20,000 cubic metres. As a result increased water pressure in the mains enabled many Sarajevans living on the upper floors of buildings to turn on the tap after 900 days without water. Last fall Mojmilo stopped working for a while because some equipment had been stolen. This was quickly returned, however, after a government's intervention.

Suleman Salihagic, 37, is one of the main victims of the "War of Water" in Sarajevo. In June last year, this municipal employee of the City Water Supplies of Sarajevo had his left leg and his right foot blown off by a shell as he was busy working on a pipe. Wounded by numerous bits of shrapnel, he showed a strong will to survive, but 50 of his colleagues have been killed and 127 wounded during the war, according to Fahdruddin Pilardzic, general manager of the Water Supplies Company. There were 1,400 employees before the war, but only 400 left in 1996.

Lying on a hospital bed, he received a wheelchair from a lady in Hamburg, Germany, via UNICEF, shortly before Christmas. Mr. Salihagic, who has to make do with a meagre monthly salary of 50 DM for a family of four, should go back to work next spring. "He is one of our best employees, he knows the city water-network very well", says his boss.

This knowledge will prove most valuable, as one of Sarajevo's main problems is the enormous number of leaks, due to lack of maintenance and shelling, according to Mr. Pilardzic "Ideally", he said, "we should repair 20 leaks a day".

"With the end of hostilities our future aim is to provide regular water to the population -- for about ten hours a day", he says. Meanwhile water remains scarce in the kitchen sinks and toilets in Sarajevo.

Under the reconstruction efforts in Bosnia after the Dayton agreement, UNICEF will now let big donors, like the World Bank and more specialized agencies undertake the costly repair of the water and sewage systems of the city.

"In the meantime, we will carry out an extensive needs-assessment of the damage and costs", says Farooq Shamsul of UNICEF. The Children's Fund will also continue providing spare parts, pipes, and purification kits, while pursuing its traditional training for local staff.

Other UNICEF activities in Bosnia, and the Former Yugoslavia, are better known -- for instance the delivery of emergency relief during the war (drugs, baby clothes, food, school books, games, etc). With peace, the agency is about to increase its long-term programmes -- like systematically immunizing all children, helping rehabilitate the primary school system (teachers' training, mine-awareness programmes, education reform), and providing psycho-social assistance to the youth who have been traumatized by the atrocities of war.

Jean-Michel Stoullig, a journalist, went on a tour in the countries of the Former Yugoslavia, shortly before Christmas 1995. Currently working as a consultant for UNICEF's Division of Information, he has been a correspondent for Agence France-Presse in Geneva, and worked before in Britain, Germany, Iran, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Paris.

■

Photo: UNICEF/R Lemoyne

Bosnia and Herzegovina: bringing water to besieged city of Sarajevo

Chernobyl

Over the past year, DHA has worked to raise the profile of the ongoing humanitarian disaster following the nuclear reactor accident at Chernobyl in 1985. On behalf of the Secretary-General, DHA prepared a report to the General Assembly on the state of humanitarian efforts for the victims of Chernobyl. This report received wide coverage in the press and DHA subsequently was able to generate additional press coverage around the meeting of the Expanded Quadripartite Committee for Coordination on Chernobyl, Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen's visit to Belarus and other events.

The Expanded Quadripartite Committee meeting was the year's highest-profile effort to push forward a coordinated international action plan on Chernobyl. Major donor countries, the three most affected countries, the United Nations, its specialised agencies, the European Union and other organizations agreed that the 10th anniversary had to be used both to bring worldwide attention back to Chernobyl and to mark a change in the international approach to Chernobyl problems: aid had to be shifted from humanitarian to re-development assistance.

At the Quadripartite Meeting, which was chaired by DHA, new cooperation was agreed between the European Union and UNESCO on providing accurate information to the affected populations on the effects of the remaining fall-out, while special note was made of the need to find funding for the continuation of the World Health Organization's efforts on the ground. In the effort to launch an economic revitalisation of the affected regions after the 10th anniversary, the International Atomic Energy Agency was ready to establish which economic activities could be safely undertaken given certain levels of residual radiation.

The higher profile for Chernobyl and the success of the Quadripartite Coordination did not, however, translate into increased aid from the international community. For a number of years now DHA has witnessed a reluctance on the part of donors to fund emergency aid and/or development assistance for the people and regions affected by Chernobyl nuclear fall-out. This is despite the fact that the health consequences of Chernobyl continue to grow and that millions of people have been affected.

In the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly, DHA estimated that 9 million people received some form of compensation because of their exposure to Chernobyl radiation, while close to 400,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. Although thyroid cancer has so far been the only disease whose incidence has increased directly as a result of Chernobyl, a disturbing increase in the incidence of gastrointestinal and cardiovascular disorders has also been noted. This is due to the worry and uncertainty which many of the region's residents must live with: if they have not yet developed some form of cancer, might they still not sometime in the future? Moreover, economic problems and having to start a new life in an unknown part of their country will increase anxiety and contribute to the likelihood of developing one of the above disorders.

The needs of these people (who include 3 million children), of the 800,000 liquidators who helped secure the power station in the aftermath of the explosion on 26 April 1986, of those who have taken to drink or whose marriages have suffered, appear to have been neglected by the international community.

DHA believes that the last opportunity to raise international funds is in the run-up to the 10th anniversary. Donors assume that the disaster and its consequences belong to the past and their attention has since been won over by other international humanitarian tragedies such as Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. DHA would like donors not to forget all the Chernobyl children who cannot afford thyroid medicine, the hospitals which cannot conduct proper diagnostic tests and treatment, and the psycho-social workers who cannot do their work because of the lack of resources.

Humanitarian aid cannot and will not be regarded as infinite -- either by the international community or the most affected countries -- but DHA would like to see donors help the victims of this worst of all civil nuclear disasters once more as the 10th anniversary approaches. DHA will work with donor countries, the countries affected and international development agencies to re-develop the areas affected by Chernobyl in a way that takes into account the residual radiation and with a view to those countries increasing their domestic output and thus being able to raise taxes and pay for their own needs. But that cannot happen overnight and, in the meantime, DHA will work to exhort the international community to come to the aid of those who need it most.

Box: 7

Interview

Cornelio Sommaruga:
"We must work to humanize politics, not to

In the violent confusion of the post Cold War, the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has become more difficult and more essential than ever. It continues to assert its neutrality, impartiality and independence in insisting on observance of the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. The ICRC President, Cornelio Sommaruga, argues that the humanitarian imperative must be protected and kept separate from political considerations.

Photo: ICRC/P. Grabhorn

The ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga visiting a family in Kigali in October 1995

"By definition humanitarian action is always taken too late"

In an address to the Humanitarian Summit in Madrid on 14 December 1995, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga recalled the major principles of humanitarian action and specified that *"humanitarian assistance must necessarily go hand in hand with the protection of victims, particularly when it comes to safeguarding civilians from the effects of hostilities and protecting children against separation from their families and prisoners from mistreatment"*.

However, Mr. Sommaruga expressed concern that although humanitarian action is becoming increasingly necessary, it is by definition always taken too late and sometimes sparks dangerous though fleeting passions. While it has to be backed by political action both before and afterwards, *"it must preserve its own motivations and dynamics and must never be sidetracked by politicians."*

In an appeal to the international community's political decision-makers, the ICRC President did not mince his words: he called for humanitarian action to be left fully autonomous and, without discounting any *"preventive and curative"* role on the part of politicians, called upon the Parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 to see that international humanitarian law is properly respected.

politicize humanitarianism."

Towards effective coordination

Aware of the repeated denials of humanitarian law, especially when genocide or ethnic cleansing take place, Mr Sommaruga simply noted that humanitarian actors do not have all the answers. As a partisan of prevention he hoped that there will be a better use of available information in order to alleviate future crises, and pleads for both early action and effective coordination.

How does the process of strengthening humanitarian action stand today?

According to the ICRC President, *"it is still essential; the magnitude of the task and the growing number of humanitarian players are in themselves a plea for the process".*

Obviously, however, there is still a long way to go before the humanitarian partners can move on from simply alongside each other to achieving genuine coordination, particularly since problems cannot simply be decreed away overnight. It is undoubtedly a long-winded task.

"Competition between agencies and other organizations involved, the indisciplined temptation for States to favour bilateral action, the lack of professionalism on the part of certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - however well-intentioned - are all matters for concern and therefore obstacles to be overcome."

Such is the point of view of the ICRC President, ever alert after a difficult 1995 to the unspeakable sufferings of entire populations under threat or terrorized throughout the world, and who believes that the strengthening of humanitarian coordination should above all enable humanitarian action to be better planned in both time and space.

"However says Mr Sommaruga, *there is a concentration of actors in the same few theatres of operation while at the same time other needs are neglected. As well, we see withdrawal from humanitarian relief operations without consideration of the need for a smooth transition to development programmes. These are just some examples of poor coordination and unsatisfactory planning."*

The ICRC, which generally operates in constantly evolving situations of conflict, wants to go on approaching coordination in a spirit of openness and objectivity, though without losing sight of its sacrosanct principle of independence. **J.P.H.**

Photo: ICRC/P. Boissel

"The ICRC wants to go on approaching coordination in a spirit of openness and objectivity"

Photo: ICRC/J. Gavsmadh

Anti-personnel land-mines: a scourge which continues unabated

Anti-personnel land-mines are a humanitarian tragedy. Last year, on 22 November, the launching of an international media campaign to stigmatise these barbarous weapons was seen as a historic step for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in its struggle against the use of certain conventional weapons.

However, despite the sustained work of ICRC, and the determination of certain other organisations, the scourge of anti-personnel land-mines continues unabated.

Two years ago, in February 1994, when the ICRC came to the conclusion that the production, transfer, and use of these mines were out of control, it called for their total prohibition. Since then some 23 Member States of the United Nations, and its Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as many other world leaders, have joined this appeal and are helping in condemning these "abhorrent and unacceptable" means of warfare.

Photo: ICRC/T. Gassmann

"Many had hoped that last year Vienna Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on certain Conventional Weapons would have taken dramatic steps to end the land-mine crisis by placing stringent conditions on their protection, transfer, and use, or even prohibiting them entirely, but unfortunately due to the pressure of national and military interests, this conference adjourned without results on land-mines", says Mr Cornelia Sommaruga, ICRC's president.

The impasse of this Conference will undoubtedly increase the suffering of many people in conflict areas. In fact, by the time the Review Conference (which reconvened in January this year, in Geneva) completes its work next April another five thousand people will have been killed by land-mines and some eight thousand maimed for life.

Standing against this mindless carnage, Mr Sommaruga is clear and direct, "it is an affront to humanitarian values as well as to civilisation, and it can and must be changed", but regrets that there is now little political will for dramatic alteration.

This is why the ICRC has opted, in 1995, for an international campaign, which will be taken up throughout this year by National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and beyond the strong message of this appeal, "Land-mines must be stopped", the ICRC believes that a solution to the land-mines crisis will have to rely on the dictate of public conscience.

"The deadlock of Vienna will increase pressure on governments to achieve results by the final session in 1996 while appeals to the norms of civilisation and humanity will currently find resonance across a broad spectrum of public opinion."

The ICRC is now convinced that stopping land-mines does not only depend on the success of international negotiations. States can take their own moral and political responsibility to end this scourge. In fact the establishment of "land-mine --free zones", in various regions of the world (as proposed by the last session of the Review Conference) may be a positive transitory solution while waiting for the final resolution for a total ban of these weapons.

J.P.H.

Box: 8

Sierra Leone's Humanitarian Emergency

Sierra Leone continues to be in the grip of a serious complex emergency. The five year old crisis has been characterized by massive displacement of civilians, most of them rural agriculturalists fleeing armed attackers. Reliable estimates indicate that violence has forced nearly 50% of Sierra Leone's population of 4.4 million to flee their homes, 1.6 million being internally displaced and nearly 370,000 seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Most of the internally displaced have fled to district towns, where they feel security is adequate to protect them from attacks. The populations of these towns and their surrounding areas has, as a result, grown by tremendous proportions. Freetown, for example, which had a pre-war population of 730,000 persons, is now home to 1.2 million. The towns of Bo, Kenema, Makeni, Matru, Zimi, Daru and Segbwema area similarly bloated. In each of the towns the result has been similar - large numbers of displaced persons fleeing brutal violence and the destruction of their villages, inundating district towns which can only be sporadically reached by relief agencies; resulting in overcrowding, malnutrition, overwhelmed social services, outbreaks of disease, the collapse of over-burdened social services and a sense of hopelessness.

Despite their own tenuous economic status, local communities have been finding ways to support the needy. One of the most revealing statistics of the emergency shows that only 210,000 of the estimated 1.6 million displaced persons in Sierra Leone can be found in camp structures, the rest having been absorbed by communities. Absorption of the needy has been the backbone of the emergency response thus far, but it cannot continue. External emergency assistance will play an increasingly important role in Sierra Leone, as traditional coping mechanisms are stretched beyond the breaking point. In recognition of this, UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have mobilized their programmes to address the emergency, with an emphasis on supporting local coping mechanisms.

While attempting to balance different but complementary interventions, the relief community faces another challenge over which it has less control: access. The greatest impediment to the relief effort thus far has been gaining sustained road access to affected communities. No credible mechanism has been established for providing security to humanitarian road convoys, which have been attacked with alarming regularity. In one response to this blockage, the World Food Programme and the International Commission of the Red Cross have begun to collaborate on cross-border delivery of aid from Guinea into the Lailahun area. This is an extraordinary measure, however, and until the access problem is solved in Sierra Leone, the relief programme will be severely handicapped.

DHA has taken an active role in the response to the emergency. In late 1995 a UN Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit was established in Freetown under the overall leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, who is also the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative. The Unit is staffed by experienced humanitarian assistance professionals who are now deeply engaged in facilitating the humanitarian programmes of the Government, UN agencies and NGOs. Established as a follow-up to in-country assessments by former Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen and a UN/NGO inter-agency mission, the UN-HACU will be active in four areas: establishment of coordination mechanisms and agreements; assessment of humanitarian needs; engaging in humanitarian advocacy; carrying-out emergency information dissemination; and supporting the Government body with coordination responsibilities, the National Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (NRRC).

The presence of the UN-HACU (Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit) in-country was felt by relief partners almost immediately upon its establishment, as the HACU team began bringing together the relief community in order to prepare the up-coming UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal (CAP). The Appeal will be launched simultaneously in New York, Geneva and Freetown during the third week of March. Seeking a total of US $57,074,706 from the international donor community, the appeal addresses the emergency needs of civilians affected by the four-year old war in the small west African country. Building on lessons learned during the preparation of the previous appeal for Sierra Leone, the forthcoming CAP is the product of joint Government, UN agency and NGO discussions and sectoral working groups. As a result, both UN agency and NGO projects are featured in the document. While the focus of the appeal is on meeting life-saving needs in the most efficient manner possible, it also features interventions that provide support to those families that have been bearing the brunt of the response burden thus far.

Box: 9

The cost of Humanitarian Assistance in 1995

The Madrid Humanitarian Summit drew attention to the large financial needs of humanitarian operations, which cost above US $4 billion in 1995. There is, at present, no authoritative source which can provide complete and reliable figures for humanitarian assistance worldwide. It is in particular very difficult to evaluate in-kind contributions, either from the donor community or from the host countries that harboured hundreds of thousands of refugees. In order to provide some insight into financial contributions for humanitarian assistance, DHA is providing, in raw form below, information which was compiled by the Department.

The Central Emergency Revolving Fund

The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has been established as a cash flow mechanism by the United Nations Secretary General in accordance with a resolution of the General Assembly on 19 December 1991. Managed under the authority of the Secretary General, CERF helps ensure the rapid and coordinated response of organisations of the UN system to humanitarian emergencies. Financed by voluntary contributions, with a target level of US $50 million, CERF is used to make advances to operational organisations and entities of the system. In response to consolidated appeals, donors have been securing contributions to the Fund since March 1992 and as 20 December last year a little more than US $120 million have been advanced to operational organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNREO, UNHCR and DHA in the initial phase of different emergencies. Experience has shown, unfortunately, that the period of repayment of advances may be longer in cases of what may be called "silent" or "unpopular" emergencies. The Fund balance as of 20 December 1995 was just over US $49 million.

Countries	US$	Contributions US $	
Algeria	30,000	Luxembourg	100,000
Australia	743,600	Malaysia	20,000
Austria	500,000	Mauritius	10,000
Belgium	327,327	Monaco	20,112
Canada	2,195,321	Namibia	1,000
Colombia	10,000	Netherlands	3,083,590
Denmark	1,999,985	New Zealand	136,825
Finland	1,533,804	Norway	1,849,970
France	4,545,455	Philippines	20,000
Germany	5,000,000	Russian Federation	250,000
Iceland	10,000	Spain	671,544
Ireland	100,000	Sweden	2,408,744
Italy	4,284,184	Switzerland	1,999,970
Japan	5,000,000	United Kingdom	5,000,000
Korea, Rep. of	50,000	United States	6,200,000
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5,000	Holy See	50,000
Liechtenstein	6,641	NGOs	1,000
		Total Contributions	**49,227,104**

UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Appeals
List of Appeals Launched or Ongoing for 1995

In consultation with the affected State, DHA prepares Consolidated Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Appeals that present an integrated programme and the role of different humanitarian partners as well as funding requirements. The Department monitors the implementation of the programme, changes in requirements, the status of contributions and keeps the international community informed regularly. In 1995, 13 Consolidated Appeals were launched for a total amount of about US $2,350 billion. 74% of the requirements were covered.

Consolidated Appeals are a recent and vital tool in the coordination process. They represent a distinct improvement over the confused proliferation of individual appeals which used to be the norm.

UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals	Appeal Time Frame (Inclusive dates)	Revised Requirements (US $)	Income (Includes carryover) (US $)	% of Needs Covered (%)	Target Beneficiaries
Afghanistan – on-going '96	Oct 95 – Sep 96	140,373,830	29,436,080	21.0%	1,700,000
Angola (incl. Demo.Rep.)	Jan 95 – Dec 95	285,725,880	147,157,274	51.5%	1,226,543
Caucasus – on-going '96	Apr 95 – Mar 96	118,479,898	71,157,274	60.1%	1,470,737
Chechnya, Russian Fed.	Jan 95 – Dec 95	23,706,426	20,819,125	87.8%	152,000
Former Yugoslavia	Jan 95 – Dec 95	514,835,288	531,456,230	103.2%	1,521,500
Iraq – on-going '96	Apr 95 – Mar 96	169,351,630	71,801,983	42.5%	5,811,000
Liberia	Jan 95 – Aug 95	65,348,947	53,033,093	67.7%	500,000
Liberia – on-going '96	Sep 95 – Aug 96	110,180,930	6,154,400	5.6%	500,000
Rwanda/Sub-Region	Jan 95 – Dec 95	668,214,361	696,140,966	104.2%	5,700,000
Sierra Leone/Guinea	Mar 95 – Dec 95	14,246,258	7,427,095	52.3%	500,000
Somalia	Jan 95 – Jun 95	93,189,173	28,541,256	30.6%	1,550,000
Sudan	Jan 95 – Dec 95	101,082,462	50,656,251	50.1%	5,866,816
Tajikistan	Jan 95 – Dec 95	37,289,923	24,513,373	65.7%	600,000
Total for Appeals launched in 1995		**2,342,024,676**	**1,738,323,312**	**74.2%**	**28,289,596**

Compiled by DHA (ETS/CTSU) on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing agencies.

Contributions to DHA's Trust Funds

DHA receives contributions from donors for specific emergency situations. Those contributions which are used to provide immediate relief to victims of mostly sudden disasters are usually earmarked for one specific purpose or emergency. DHA usually expands the cash and in kind donations received through operational agencies of the UN system, or, eventually through the office of the humanitarian coordinator, wherever these offices exist.

1994-1995 Biennium

	Income
Trust Fund for Disaster Relief Assistance (both Natural Disasters and Complex Emergencies)	63,627,328
Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction (Prevention and Preparedness)	10,672,067
Voluntary Trust Funds for Assistance in Mine Clearance	12,144,870
Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund	38,209,882
Trust Funds for Humanitarian Assistance and the UN Guard Contingent in Iraq	27,870,975
Other	7,617,461
Total	**160,142,583**

The Crisis in the Great Lakes region: Towards better management

by Pat Banks, DHA Coordinator

To someone unfamiliar with the events in the Great Lakes region in 1994, a visit to Kigali would show nothing out of the ordinary. The pretty capital of Rwanda, nestling on a succession of hills, bustles with life and people going about their daily business. Markets are stocked with food, clothes and household goods, the banks function efficiently, electricity and water supplies are stable. The Kigali of late 1995 is a far cry from how it looked in April of 1994, when the genocide that claimed up to one million men, women and children began. Yet beneath the surface, the grief and bitterness of a nation haunted by genocide have left the region with many complex problems and a deep sense of mistrust which threatens to last for generations.

The prolonged presence of some 1.7 million Rwandan and 354,000 Burundi refugees in neighbouring countries has affected the stability of Rwanda and host countries. In Burundi, the general climate of insecurity, fear and conflict between armed gangs and the army is increasingly endemic.

The fate of the **Great Lakes region** is inextricably linked to the fate of its peoples living outside their countries of origin and for most Rwandan refugees the only viable solution is for them to return to their home country. Hence, a major focus of UN humanitarian and government efforts in 1995 was the creation of conditions which would enable refugees to return home voluntarily and in an organised manner. From mid-1994 throughout 1995, some 800,000 "old case-load" refugees - many who fled the country in the late 1950s - returned to Rwanda. However, in spite of efforts to encourage Rwandans who fled following the genocide to voluntarily repatriate, less than 100,000 of these people have been willing to return home. The implementation of the Bujumbura Plan of Action, which was drawn up during a Regional Conference on repatriation and displaced persons in February 1995, has faced a number of obstacles. Countries of asylum have become increasingly frustrated by their refugee populations. Tanzania closed its borders to all refugees in April 1995 and the decision by Zaire to expel some 15,000 refugees over a four-day period in August 1995, serves to highlight the tensions building up in host countries.

> "Despite extremely difficult conditions, WFP continued to supply food for displaced persons and refugees"

Rehabilitation and recovery work starts

In view of the continued slow pace of repatriation, UN assistance in the region has included large amounts of care and maintenance for refugee camps although increasingly throughout 1995, more programmes were launched to enhance the ability of Rwandan communes to absorb returnees. Thanks to the generosity of donors, almost 90% of WFP's gross original requirements for the region were met.

Substantial amounts of food, including targeted food assistance and food-for-work programmes, were provided by WFP and other partners in 1995 to IDPs, returnees, orphans, hospital patients and other vulnerable groups. Food-for-work assumed increasing importance throughout the year, targeting rehabilitation and first stage recovery. WHO and UNICEF continued to focus on re-establishing the health care system, including rebuilding destroyed or damaged infrastructure and training of health personnel to replace those who had been killed or had fled the country. Technical assistance was also provided to help the relevant government ministries assume responsibility for the management and maintenance of health care delivery. Water programmes continued, benefiting over some 2.5 million people. In addition to the supply of seeds and tools, FAO undertook a seeds multiplication programme and launched actions to enhance disease control and livestock management. Increased efforts on the part of UNICEF and its partners in Rwanda to reunite unaccompanied children with their families, led to the successful reunification of more than 10,000 children. A National Trauma Recovery Centre was opened in 1995 to serve as the focal point for training in psychosocial trauma interventions, research, documentation and as an out-

patient clinic for the treatment of severely traumatised children. Other activities focused on the demobilisation of child soldiers and the transfer of child prisoners to special accommodation. Due to the combined efforts of UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR, over one million children were able to attend school.

Human rights abuses remained a concern throughout 1995 and the Human Rights Field Office in Rwanda continued to work closely with the Government of Rwanda to monitor the situation and investigate reports. A broad-based programme of promotional activities, ranging from projects for the rebuilding of the Rwandan justice system, to human rights education.

While no direct Appeal had been made for **Burundi** in 1995, humanitarian assistance programmes assumed more importance as the year progressed and population displacements increased. However, by late 1995 political instability and military confrontations led to major constraints in access and the delivery of assistance. By late 1995, the security situation for humanitarian personnel significantly worsened, leading to the temporary suspension of some programmes.

Despite extremely difficult conditions, WFP continued to supply food for displaced persons and refugees in camps in the north of the country and provided ad hoc food distributions to newly displaced persons dispersed throughout the country. Rations were also provided to families leaving the camps to return to their home communes. WHO, UNICEF and UNDP continued to rebuild the national health structure in areas where access was possible. With additional support from UNFP, various activities were launched to prevent and control epidemics. FAO and UNDP agricultural assistance targeted populations in possession of land, including displaced persons and returnees. Some development and training programmes in the agricultural sector were also possible in areas of calm.

Throughout 1995, UNICEF, UNESCO and the UN Centre for Human Rights promoted peace education to support a return to peace and national respect for human rights and reconciliation. As in Rwanda, efforts focused on tracing the families of unaccompanied children and finding foster homes for orphans. Through these efforts, foster families were found for 12,500 children.

Following a DHA mission to Burundi in March 1995, it was concluded that a DHA humanitarian affairs officer should be seconded to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to assist in the coordination of humanitarian activities. With the appointment of a new Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in November, an additional humanitarian affairs officer was deployed and existing DHA humanitarian support staff transferred to his office. Weekly reports on the humanitarian situation were produced by the humanitarian support team, as well as special reports on issues of major concern.

As part of efforts to help build a regional capacity to manage the crisis in the Great Lakes, DHA established in November 1995 its Integrated Regional Information Network in Nairobi. The Network has been designed to assist in the flow of information within and across countries of the region and enhance effective coordination of humanitarian assistance, as well as early warning.

Emergency Information Network in the Great Lakes

Are you suffering from "information fatigue"?

Today's information technologies, which help produce more and more information, do not -by themselves- help filter out the dull from the definitive, or make a humanitarian programme any more effective.

The DHA Integrated Regional Information Network for the Great Lakes (IRIN), based in Nairobi, Kenya, is one of DHA's innovative responses to the growing complexity of humanitarian emergencies: the challenge of information management.

IRIN sends out a customized feed of critical humanitarian information directly to key decision makers on a daily basis; others receive a menu of new material regularly. The Network can also, on request, perform ad hoc documentation searches.

By combining original reports from the field with an authoritative archive of background material from the widest possible array of sources, IRIN's fax, electronic and postal network acts as a reliable information broker - matching the needs of the information producer and consumer in a fast and cost-effective manner.

For further information, contact:
Pat Banks, Coordinator, UN DHA IRIN, P.O. Box 30218, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel.: +254 2 441125, Fax.: +254 2 448816,
e-mail: irin@dha.sasa.unon.org.

Box: 10

Operations Centre

The Emergency Operations Centre: An effective workplace with advanced systems and specialized expertise

The United Nations system has a central role to play in international relief efforts to mitigate the consequences of emergencies and disasters.

The DHA office in Geneva, and more particularly, its Relief Coordination branch is responsible for coordinating the UN system's response to natural and technological disasters, from earthquakes and cyclones to environmental disasters of a sudden nature.

Two years after its implementation, in Geneva, an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) offers an effective coordination point and permits an immediate reaction to catastrophes. "A 24-hour duty system, built up around a team of highly-qualified experts and an advanced network of communications, permits the continuous monitoring of the occurrence and development of disaster situations", says Philippe Boulle, Chief of DHA's Information Management and External Relations Branch.

From the DHA Emergency Operation Centre, which allows instant real-time monitoring of information, members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team can be contacted through a system of National Mobilizing Centres and in a few hours after the disaster event, an UNDAC team can be put on stand-by or dispatched to the disaster site.

Photo: Arts & Photo Geneva/1995

Beyond the provision of technical and substantive support to operations and advanced mapping systems, the EOC issues information at hand and provides for its dissemination. "Last year, for instance, following the volcanic eruption of Fogo Volcano, in Cape Verde, off the African coast, we issued a series of situation reports indicating, as of 15 April, that the volcano was still active and was still a threat", says Marie-Josephe Floret, of DHA's Information Dissemination Unit.

In Geneva, the Relief Coordination Duty Officer was constantly kept informed of the situation. Through a number of reports issued by the UNDAC team on site it appeared that there was no way of predicting future developments of the volcano's activity. "The most likely worst-case scenario is lava flowing down the east side, cutting off two thirds of the island from the airport, destroying three to six villages and making 2,500 to 6,000 people homeless," according to a DHA-Geneva Situation Report.

The same series of reports gave accounts both of the national and international response; thus enabling the EOC to disseminate precise information relevant to short-term as well as long-term needs of the local authorities to build up civil protection preparedness against future volcanic eruptions.

Another example of the advantage of monitored dissemination of Emergency Reports to donors was the prompt response, two and a half months later of governments, NGOs and UN agencies following the severe earthquake which struck Sakhalin Island, in the Russian Federation.

As demonstrated, on 15 October, during the United Nations Open Doors Day, DHA was also very much involved in monitoring other disasters in 1995 - from Kobe, in Japan, to Qarluqi Zeri Kutal village in Afghanistan (landslide, March 1995) via Bago, in Myanmar (fire outbreak , April 1995) and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (floods in July- August 1995), to name but a few. The centre has proved that it is an essential tool for DHA in its efforts to bring adapted emergency response to disasters throughout the world. ■

JPH.

ReliefWeb Project:

A whole set of information to support effectively the coordination of activities, strategies and programmes

By Matthias Warns, Interim Project Manager, 1995

In case of large-scale emergency situations, such as big natural disasters or conflict outbreaks, humanitarian organizations need to quickly dispatch emergency response teams on-site. To deploy such a team under safe and optimum conditions, background information about the affected country and the ongoing situation is needed prior to its departure. This information covers areas such as the historical and political background of the country, the composition of the population, the climate and geography, the available logistics and transportation infrastructure, the regulations concerning the import of goods, licensing and other related legal issues as well as the contact points within the national administration.

Decision makers within donor governments confronted with a request for resources for a particular emergency situation need to base their allocation decision on a whole set of information, including assessments of the situation undertaken by their own or other organizations, information on how the request received relates to other activities undertaken on the ground, information on the capacities and experience of potential implementing partners as well as resources already allocated by other donors.

Desk officers responsible for situation monitoring and programme implementation in specific countries are requested to prepare periodic reports on ongoing or potential future emergency situations which will serve as a basis for the development of policies and strategies. Based mainly on the input from their own field missions and/or local staff, another critical element in these reports is represented by the analysis of the situation undertaken by other humanitarian organizations.

While working in the field, project managers concentrate on implementing their own relief activities in the most efficient manner. Having regular and timely access to information about existing in-country logistics and other infrastructure capacities as well as relief activities undertaken by other agencies facilitates the optimum use of existing human and material resources for the benefit of the affected population.

A need to increase the efficiency of information flow

Today, in most cases, the information items referred to in the scenarios outlined above are available to the individuals concerned, however very often in a way and format which is not really adapted to their actual needs. For instance, one can observe that desk officers and decision makers located at agency or donor headquarters are usually flooded with all kinds of policy papers, statements, reports, appeals etc, making it a tedious and time-consuming task to dig out the pieces of data actually needed. Field managers, on the other hand, gather most of the information they

Zaire: refugees from Rwanda/1994

need from local *ad hoc* coordination meetings, and often do not have regular access to even such basic data as e.g., what logistics capacity other agencies working in the same affected area have already established.

There is a widely recognised need therefore to dramatically increase *the efficiency of the information flow* (and not simply the volume of information being available or exchanged) between the various actors involved in humanitarian assistance to support effectively the coordination of activities, strategies and programmes. *This is the ultimate goal of the ReliefWeb project.* It can be achieved in our view by establishing an electronic system which facilitates the sharing of a *well-defined set of information items* focused on the needs of the individuals dealing with the various aspects of emergency management. These items should be easily accessible, available in the right format (e.g., to allow comparison of information on the same topic originating from different sources) and provided in a timely manner, thereby eliminating the need for lengthy search or retrieval procedures. Data available within this system should be entered and maintained directly by the source of the information, to avoid unnecessary duplication and manipulations.

By aiming at achieving this goal, ReliefWeb will at the same time:

- enhance the effectiveness of the decision-making process within humanitarian organizations; and
- support the coordination and improve the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

ReliefWeb will serve the humanitarian community in preparing for or responding to any type of humanitarian crisis. ReliefWeb will provide information to answer questions such as: what food, equipment and medical supplies are likely to be available for distribution in a given country at a given time and under what conditions? Or: what would be required to transport these supplies to a potential disaster site?

ReliefWeb will support individuals dealing with the planning, global management and monitoring of emergency preparedness and response activities who are involved in the preparation and/or ratification of *strategic decisions* about the allocation of resources, the deployment of relief efforts and/or the implementation of preventive measures. ReliefWeb will also meet the information requirements of individuals dealing with the implementation of strategic decisions and the day-to-day management of projects and operations which require *tactical decisions* to be taken on an ongoing basis.

The major categories of participants in ReliefWeb are governments of affected countries, donor governments, international organizations and NGOs. Within these organizations, ReliefWeb will be used by high-level decision makers, desk officers and planners, fund-raising officers and field managers. The academic community may also participate.

ReliefWeb will be implemented as an open-architecture, distributed information network, to allow maximum flexibility for development and to properly reflect the specifics derived from the mandate and methods of conducting humanitarian activities of the participating organizations.

Given the complexity of the issue and the number of actors potentially involved, ReliefWeb will be implemented in a modular way,

ReliefWeb

- an on-line "electronic library" based on interconnected information repositories operated by participating organizations. Data on this system will be accessible through major networks and various user-friendly interfaces including mapping technologies.
- an electronic conferencing system enabling reliable, timely and accurate exchange of strategic and operational information between key officials and senior managers engaged in joint international responses to humanitarian emergencies.
- a set of guidelines and procedures to facilitate the aggregation of data from various sources into a common framework providing a consolidated picture of a given crisis situation. This includes the identification of appropriate information sources, the assignment of specific responsibilities for data supply and maintenance to participating organizations as well as, if necessary, the development of new mechanisms for information collection and processing for those areas which are not yet covered by existing entities.
- a set of technical standards and specifications needed to allow the seamless interconnection of information systems operated by participating organizations and the integration of data into a common interface.
- Standard software packages to allow the use of the facilities mentioned above for those organizations which do not have the resources and/or capacities to develop their own information systems.

Box: 11

starting with a limited number of representative test cases/countries and participants. The focus will be placed first on the most critical information exchange needs as identified by the actors concerned. Maximum attention will be paid at each stage of the development to build upon existing infrastructures and systems, as well as to take into account specific expertise accumulated by the participating organizations.

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), in its function as the coordinating entity within the UN system for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the implementation of related emergency preparedness and mitigation measures, will play the leading role in the implementation of the project, by assuming its day-to-day management and ensuring that the requirements of all actors concerned are properly taken into account. Appropriate management structures will be put in place to ensure joint ownership and full consultation of all relevant actors at every stage of the project development.

To obtain more detailed information about the project, please contact the ReliefWeb Project Management Team, United Nations, DHA-Geneva, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Fax: (+41-22) 9170023, e-mail: reliefweb@dha.unicc.org. More information can also be obtained by accessing the ReliefWeb prototype system available on the Internet (URL: http://www.unicc.org/relief). ■

ReliefWeb in Azerbaijan

One day in November 1995, in a Turkish Red Crescent refugee camp near Barda (Azerbaijan), a short- term gap in critical medical supplies arose. It took the camp managers a considerable amount of time to resolve this issue, mainly because of the lack of information about resources which might have been available from other local relief organizations. This situation, which was witnessed by a ReliefWeb team during its recent visit to Azerbaijan, is a typical example of the urgent need to significantly improve the flow of critical operational information among *local* actors operating in a given emergency situation.

In Azerbaijan, like in many other countries, information sharing among the local humanitarian community happens mainly through periodic meetings. Topics discussed at these meetings, which in the case of Azerbaijan take place at least four times a month, include global and sectorial (i.e. food, health, shelter) coordination of relief activities, overall assessments of the situation as well as sharing of human and material resources. In addition, monthly consolidated reports on ongoing operations are prepared by various organizations and circulated both locally and to the international community. Outside these established procedures, information sharing relies mainly on the traditional point-to-point telecommunication facilities (i.e. fax and telephone, and more recently electronic mail).

Although local actors are generally satisfied with the amount and quality of the available background information, the access to "real-time", up-to-date operational data is generally perceived as being insufficient to effectively support the day-to-day coordination of activities as well as the sharing of human and material resources. This is were the ReliefWeb project could bring a unique added value to the local community, both by cutting down time requirements for the preparation of activity reports and by facilitating the "real-time" sharing of operational information. Depending on the available infrastructure, various levels of technology can be used for this purpose, from simple bulletin boards to sophisticated mapping techniques and local Web sites. Alongside this development, efforts need to be undertaken by the local community towards adopting standard formats for the operational data elements, which would allow their consolidation into summary pictures of events and activities.

Box: 12

DHA closes its office in Tajikistan and looks back at more than three years of successful Inter-Agency coordination

By Katarina Toll, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, DHA Geneva

By the end of 1995 UNHCR field officers, who had been driving through the desert plains of southern Tajikistan to the border of northern Afghanistan for the past two years, were no longer surprised when their jeep was flagged down by rows of former refugees patiently waiting along the dusty roadside. With an almost systematic gesture, they rolled down the window, took the letters from the waving hands and carried them, like every Wednesday, to be given to friends and relatives across the border.

Many of the Tajik letter-writers were refugees living in camps in Northern Afghanistan not long ago, having fled the civil war which plagued this Central Asian republic in 1992 and 1993. Most of them have received assistance from UN agencies, NGOs and other aid organisations in the form of shelter, food and other relief items, in addition to facilitating their resettlement. They were now waiting for the remaining parent, son, daughter or friend to also take the decisive step - leave the camps and return home.

Bradley Foerster, DHA's Humanitarian Affairs Officer in Tajikistan until DHA closed its Field Coordination Unit in Dushanbe in December 1995, recently described this vivid scene. He had witnessed it during several field trips with UNHCR to the border with Afghanistan, where refugees crossed by barge over the River Panj under the watchful gaze of the Russian border forces. "It was a very powerful image in the midst of the destruction", he recalled. During his 10-month assignment in the country, Mr. Foerster, who is now a Desk Officer with the Complex Emergency Division at DHA in New York, accompanied UN Agencies and NGOs on numerous missions as part of DHA's coordination function in Tajikistan.

DHA established its Field Coordination Unit in mid-1994 in support of the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Pierre-François Pirlot, who was also the UNHCR Chief of Mission in Tajikistan. However, DHA's involvement in Tajikistan dates back to the autumn of 1992, with the preparation of the first of three UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals.

> "The human involvement of the UN agencies has been among the most essential elements of this operation"

Supported by the Consolidated Appeal Process, UN agencies including UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UNV and UNDP have worked in collaboration with IOM, the Red Cross movement and NGOs to cater to the needs of conflict-affected populations and to make possible the return home of refugees and internally displaced persons. By the end of 1995, the refugees remaining in Northern Afghanistan numbered roughly 20,000, compared to 60,000 in 1993. Within Tajikistan, fewer than 10,000 persons remained displaced out of an IDP population estimated at between 700,000 and 900,000, many of them women, children and elderly persons, who fled their homes during the civil conflict.

Thanks to contributions totalling some US $100 million between 1993 and 1995, of which US $63 million were raised through DHA's Consolidated Appeal Process, Tajikistan's post-conflict emergency needs have largely been met. However, as illustrated by the letter-carrying tradition between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the success of the emergency response must not be measured only in financial terms. The human involvement of the United Nations agencies, NGOs and other organisations, both in delivering much-needed relief assistance and promoting the reintegration of refugees and displaced populations in war-affected communities, has been among the most essential elements of this operation.

Aid agencies confronted a number of constraints in delivering humanitarian assistance to isolated war-affected areas, mostly related to logistical difficulties and often precarious security conditions. However, coordination among the humanitarian community was successful and ensured an efficient

response to the emergency. "Tajikistan is an isolated country and the humanitarian effort was a relatively small operation," Mr. Foerster explained. "This encouraged a very easy working rapport among the various aid organisations".

The establishment of UNHCR field offices throughout southern Tajikistan and the presence in war-affected communities of several UN Agencies and other international organisations were crucial in facilitating the return process. Mr. Foerster emphasised that the efficiency with which UNHCR officers carried out their human-rights monitoring function was impressive. "They played a very important role in helping stabilise a precarious situation," he commented. "This helped encourage people to return."

The last Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan, covering the period from January to December 1995, included an important phase-down plan involving the UN community in Tajikistan in addition to NGOs. By the end of the year, the high number of returnees and the success of programmes designed to help stabilise this population in their communities of habitual residence, including income-generating, peace-building and education schemes, successfully brought this plan to its final stage.

By the end of 1995, UNHCR had thus ceased its field presence in southern Tajikistan. Its Chief of Mission has since been designated UNHCR's Regional Representative for the five Central Asian republics. In parallel, DHA handed over its coordination function to UNDP in Tajikistan and closed its office in Dushanbe in December. UNDP will coordinate future assistance, placing emphasis on rehabilitation and development projects.

Today, the persistent problems facing the Tajik population must not be forgotten. The entire population is affected by economic hardship, which was precipitated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and further compounded by the civil conflict. Taking into account the continuation of low-level fighting, particularly in the mountainous and border regions, it is unlikely that these hardships will diminish.

The needs are especially great in the food sector. Voicing this concern, FAO issued a Special Alert early in 1996, emphasising the persistent bread shortages and other hardships in Tajikistan. WFP and other organisations continue emergency food aid programmes, mainly in the south, targeting in total about 500,000 persons. "Most agencies have felt the need to provide more food than they have been able to do", says Paul Turnbull, Desk Officer at WFP, which covers about 300,000 persons among the total population receiving emergency food aid in Tajikistan. Ideally, the assistance should reach about 600,000 persons, Mr. Turnbull says, but restrained donor support for Tajikistan has substantially reduced the chances of reaching this target figure.

WFP food aid monitors, who report regularly on the situation in the various communities, depict a distressing and painful picture of the suffering of the population. The recent description by one of the monitors of his encounter with a woman together with six starving children shows that the situation is extremely precarious. "The family has no pension, had no food at home and came to the (WFP) district headquarters for relief food", the food aid monitor reported. "There are many cases like this of people who are finding life exceedingly difficult. In many villages, people lamented their plight, stating they were considering suicide rather than suffer hunger." Taking into account the food now available, based on reajusted needs, WFP estimates that it will run out of food at the end of April 1996.

Although the current needs in Tajikistan are beyond the scope of the Consolidated Appeal framework, DHA, the UN system and other organisations are aware that they must continue to monitor the situation. DHA, through its Complex Emergency Division, remains in regular contact with UNDP, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners to keep abreast of developments in the country and the region. Undoubtedly, it will be essential for Tajikistan to be at peace in order to seek long-term solutions providing its population with hope for a better future. ■

Photo: UNHCR/A. Hollmann

Tajikistan 1995

Interview

Emma Bonino:

"The Madrid Summit brought in a new humanitarian aid"

Emma Bonino, former member of the Italian and European Parliaments, was appointed head of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in 1995. In order to re-kindle declining donor interest and to coordinate the efforts of the major humanitarian organisations, she convened the first Humanitarian Summit in Madrid in December last year. A few weeks later, from Brussels, she made the following comments.

Question: On 14 December, last year, you convened a humanitarian summit in Madrid where leaders and representatives of prominent humanitarian agencies and donors met. Why such a summit? Beyond the Madrid Declaration, what is your general comment on this event, what will it change for the future and should such a formula be reconducted on a regular basis?

Mrs. Bonino: During my first months in office I met separately with all the major humanitarian leaders of the USA, the UN, the Red Cross and the NGO community. It quickly transpired that, for one reason or another, these leaders have never sat down together around a table to discuss fundamental problems affecting their strikingly similar mandates for saving and preserving lives of victims of humanitarian crises. Given the fact that the EU is by far the largest donor of humanitarian aid in the world and that half of this aid is channelled through the commission, I was in a good position to try to bring these leaders together for the first time.

All the participants rated the event a success, and it received very good media coverage too. Despite the understandable differences of emphasis, the Madrid Declaration represents an extraordinary level of agreement amongst these leaders on a number of important points of principle and analysis of humanitarian events. It highlighted the new challenges faced by humanitarian aid agencies and donors: after an unprecedented explosion of humanitarian needs and aid in the last four years there are no signs that demands for assistance will decrease, making preventive thinking all the more imperative. And it also highlighted the limits, since such preventive

Photo: Vimagen Madrid/Efe

Queen Sophia of Spain and Emma Bonino with leaders and representatives of prominent humanitarian agencies

momentum to international cooperation on

strategies need to be taken on board at the political level as they are not part of the mandate of humanitarian agencies.

I think that the Summit has created a new momentum in international cooperation on humanitarian aid. The humanitarian agencies have better understood the necessity to maintain dialogue with the important donors. And the USA has had to adapt itself to a new world: The US Government currently does not command sufficient resources on its own to follow up its own diplomatic successes with bilateral aid (either humanitarian or preventive development assistance).

Whether the Humanitarian Summit will be followed up by subsequent Humanitarian Summits hosted by other participants remains to be seen but several participants seemed to be interested in a continuation of this idea either in general meetings or thematic conferences.

Q: Close coordination among humanitarian agencies and donors to achieve maximum impact to reduce suffering is mentioned in the Madrid Declaration. What is your view on that with regard to 1995? In the future, how can this coordination be improved in the field?

Mrs Bonino: Coordination is imperative as you say, and much remains to be done to improve it. Coordination needs to take place at all levels, from policy to implementation. Close field coordination is a priority in crisis situations, but needs to follow on from policy discussions which ensure we are all pulling in the same direction. There is a lot of work to be done to exploit the full potential of the new information technologies for coordination, and this is a theme that we are quite attached to at ECHO. Institutional arrangements, however, must not be neglected either, especially in complex environments, and that is of course where DHA has a particular role to play, above all perhaps through practical initiatives which demonstrate to the humanitarian community all they have in common and what they have to gain from pursuing a common stance on certain issues. I am thinking, for example, of DHA's work on disaster management registers, or on the use of military and civil defence assets, or again of its coordination of the UN position on land-mines.

"We will certainly do all we can to maintain funding levels as they have been in the past"

Q: As European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, how do you see the cooperation between ECHO and the United Nations, DHA in particular?

Mrs Bonino: The UN agencies -- especially UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF -- are essential partners for ECHO. We rely on their skills in many crisis situations, especially in major crises. ECHO's policy is fully one of constructive partnership. This means we are free to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each organization and plan accordingly. As regards DHA especially, the contacts we have relate mainly to horizontal initiatives -- MCDA, ReliefWeb, IDNDR and so forth, and to the general policy dialogue. We are attached to developing these links in the interests of both organizations and of the overall efficiency of the humanitarian response to crises. ECHO is always open to exploring collaborative measures which give practical results and serve our common objectives, and I believe we need to intensify the dialogue between our two organizations with a view to identifying more such joint initiatives. In any case, ECHO's support for DHA in the operational development of its coordination mandate is and always has been clear.

Q: At a time of domestic budgetary constraints, do you think agencies which faced serious problems of funding for the humanitarian programmes in 1995 will get more attention in 1996?

Ms. Bonino: I do not, unfortunately, see much reason to believe that 1996 will be very different to 1995, but as far as ECHO is concerned at least we will certainly do all we can to maintain funding levels as they have been in the past, consistent of course with the overall development of the humanitarian situation during the year. ■

The Humanitarian Summit: A call for action

By Madeleine Moulin-Acevedo, DHA Press Officer

The Humanitarian Summit held in Madrid on 14 December will be a milestone on the road to the reduction of human suffering. Ten heads of the world's major humanitarian agencies called for decisive international action to resolve and prevent the crises that threaten the planet.

Convened by Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and attended by leaders of USAID, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNDHA, IFRC, Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union (CLONG), Medecins sans frontieres, and Interaction, the Summit was a response to the mounting frustration of humanitarian organizations. The latter believe that their work is being used as a substitute for political action and that the main obstacle facing humanitarian organisations is the absence of political will in the international community to address the underlying causes of crises.

"**Humanitarian action is first and foremost about saving lives: this means putting the victims first. Humanitarian organisations are the international community's key life support system. Our responsability is to the victims**", recalled Peter Hansen, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

The debates proved the convergence of views on the fundamental humanitarian issues which concern more than 50 million refugees and internally displaced persons in need of assistance throughout the world, not to mention the tens of millions more who do not show up on the statistics.

"The summit was a response to the mounting frustation of humanitarian organisations"

The leaders agreed that simply addressing humanitarian crises is not enough. Resolute action must be taken to prevent disasters by attacking such root causes as: abject poverty, hunger, overpopulation and heinous human rights abuses.

The strengthening of the links between relief and development have been emphasized in order to rebuild war-shattered societies, consolidate peace and prevent the seeds of future disaster from being sown.

They also called for "**proactive crisis prevention**" and noted that too great a proportion of their resources is spent on responding to crises, thus leaving too little for prevention. This trend, they agreed, must be reversed.

"Humanitarian action is first and foremost about saving lives: this means putting the victims first"

Other humanitarian issues discussed were the situation in the Great Lakes region, the forgotten crises, and the question of Bosnia. Whilst the leaders applauded the signing of the Bosnian peace accord, in Paris that same day, they also appealed for international commitment to those crises that are not as prominent on the international agenda.

Humanitarian assistance, mainly in response to burgeoning man-made and complex disasters, costs donors more than US $4 billion a year at a time of belt-tightening and domestic budgetary constraints. An estimated 86 per cent of all official humanitarian aid comes from the European Union, its member countries and the United States.

At the end of the summit, the **Madrid Declaration** was presented to Felipe Gonzalez, Spanish Prime Minister and then President of the European Union who was officially mandated to bring this appeal to the attention of all European Governments meeting in the Spanish capital for the European Union Summit from December 16-17, 1995. It also received the support of Mrs Hillary Clinton and of Pope John-Paul II.

"**We all hope that the Madrid Declaration will be an important step in closing the gap between aspiration and performance, which makes the difference between civilization and chaos**", concluded Peter Hansen in his closing remarks. ■

Printed at United Nations, Geneva
GE.96-00872 - March 1996 - 12,000

DHA News/NL/18
ISSN 1020-2609

Madrid Declaration

We Appeal to the International Community at large for:

Determination to take whatever resolute decisive action may be necessary to resolve crisis situations and not to use humanitarian activities as a substitute for political action. The independence and impartiality of humanitarian assistance must be fully recognized and respected. This is indispensable for saving lives in crisis situations.

The development of a global system of proactive crisis prevention. Determination and political will are needed to address both the direct and indirect causes of conflict and other humanitarian emergencies. Early warning should lead to early action.

A new and imaginative commitment to development assistance. Crises are greatly exacerbated by the current decrease in development assistance, just at a time when it needs to be increased to reduce the severity of humanitarian crises. Poverty leads to vulnerability and forces people into survival strategies that can further hasten the onslaught of crises. As a result, crises become more likely and more deadly when they strike.

A global campaign against hunger which afflicts one out of every seven people on earth. Food security is one of the issues which must be singled out in view of the particular importance that food has in poor rural households in the developing world. Not only must food production and supplies be assured but also access at affordable prices for the poorest segments of society. Similar attention must be given to the supply of clean drinking water.

Greater stress on and support for preparedness measures, especially for natural disasters. Reluctance to fund local initiatives, carry out preparedness programs and support self-reliance may not only cause human suffering when the crisis strikes but it will also lead to much larger costs for victims and donors alike.

Resources to bring relief and political solutions also to the many "forgotten" crises which do not hit, or quickly slip from, the international headlines. These crises, just like any others, threaten the survival of millions of people and can destabilize whole regions.

Urgent steps to address the deliberate targeting of civilians in today's conflicts. Atrocities such as ethnic cleansing, torture and rape have become in many cases tools and objectives of warfare, in flagrant disregard for international humanitarian law. All parties to conflict should be held accountable. Impunity for human rights abuses must end. The International Criminal Tribunals for Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda must be enabled fully to carry out their mandates, with a view to the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Tribunal for the punishment of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Measures to address the specific protection and assistance needs of the millions of people who have fled within their own countries as a result of conflict. Guiding principles must be formulated to improve their plight, and to safeguard their right to physical and material security. We also support the development by the UN of improved facilities to prevent human rights abuses in cases of internal conflict. Moreover, the right of refugees to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution must be upheld.

Urgent attention to be given to the needs and protection of all victims, with priority to women, children and the elderly, who are invariably the vast majority of all victims of armed conflict. The central role of women must be recognized and women must be reasserted in the planning, management and distribution of relief assistance, as the best way of ensuring that relief reaches the most vulnerable. Their reproductive health must be systematically taken into consideration.
Children, in particular, should not be deprived of their home and family, of their right to life, physical and psychological health and education, and to a peaceful existence.

Resources to remain available to meet the challenge of rebuilding war-shattered societies and thus consolidate a peace settlement and prevent the seeds of future disaster from being sown. The links between relief and development must be strengthened and local capacity to cope must be reinforced. Reconstruction involves not only water systems, bridges and roads but also civil society: the demobilization of soldiers and the rebuilding of the judiciary and administration and of education and social services. Flexible mechanisms to provide more funding for emergency rehabilitation must be found. At the same time, relief must be managed efficiently in order to phase out humanitarian aid as soon as the emergency period is over, switching over rapidly to other forms of assistance.

All concerned to respect the humanitarian and non-political nature of our work, as well as our respective mandates, to give us full access to all persons in need, to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel, and to provide us with a more secure basis for funding. In this connection we reaffirm international concern and commitment. The resourcefulness of human solidarity is enormous. Yet fatalism and compassion fatigue are real threats. Governments and leaders need to recognize that, in an ever more interdependent world, the vital interests of every nation in global peace and security can only be achieved through concerted international action.

Signed by:

Brian Atwood, Administrator of USAID
Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF
Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of WFP
Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid
Agostinho Jardim Gonçalves, President of the Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union
Peter Hansen, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees
Doris Schopper, President of MSF
Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the ICRC
Julia Taft, President of InterAction

14 December 1995

DHA Mission Statement

Mobilize and coordinate the collective efforts of the international community, in particular those of the UN system, to meet in a coherent and timely manner the needs of those exposed to human suffering and material destruction in disasters and emergencies. This involves reducing vulnerability, promoting solutions to root causes and facilitating the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.